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the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are undernourished has increased from 250 million to 800 million (FAO 1996). The number of people who are malnourished has increased from 1.2 billion to 1.6 billion (FAO 1996).

There are a number of reasons why the number of people who are undernourished has increased. One of the main reasons is that the world population has increased. In 1990, there were 5.3 billion people in the world. In 2000, there were 6.1 billion people in the world. In 2010, there are expected to be 6.9 billion people in the world (FAO 1996).

Another reason why the number of people who are undernourished has increased is that the world's food supply has not increased enough to keep pace with the growing population. In 1990, the world's food supply was 2.5 billion tonnes. In 2000, the world's food supply was 2.6 billion tonnes. In 2010, the world's food supply is expected to be 2.7 billion tonnes (FAO 1996).

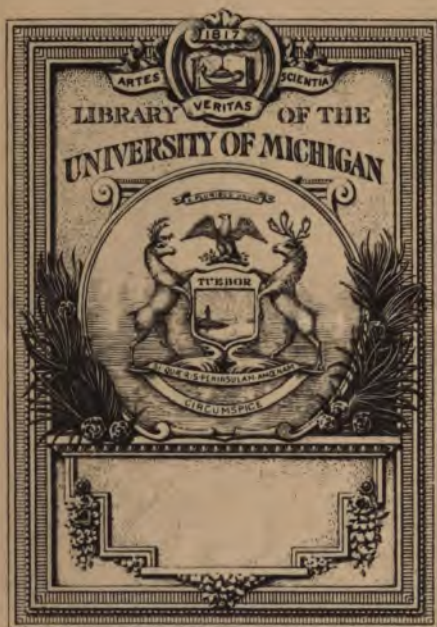
A third reason why the number of people who are undernourished has increased is that the world's food supply is not distributed evenly. In 1990, 1.2 billion people were undernourished. In 2000, 1.6 billion people were undernourished. In 2010, 1.8 billion people are expected to be undernourished (FAO 1996).

There are a number of ways in which the world's food supply can be increased. One way is to increase the amount of land that is used for agriculture. Another way is to increase the amount of water that is used for agriculture. A third way is to increase the amount of fertilizer that is used for agriculture (FAO 1996).

There are a number of ways in which the world's food supply can be distributed more evenly. One way is to increase the amount of food that is stored in grain reserves. Another way is to increase the amount of food that is distributed to the poor. A third way is to increase the amount of food that is distributed to the hungry (FAO 1996).

There are a number of ways in which the world's food supply can be made more sustainable. One way is to increase the amount of land that is used for agriculture. Another way is to increase the amount of water that is used for agriculture. A third way is to increase the amount of fertilizer that is used for agriculture (FAO 1996).

There are a number of ways in which the world's food supply can be made more secure. One way is to increase the amount of land that is used for agriculture. Another way is to increase the amount of water that is used for agriculture. A third way is to increase the amount of fertilizer that is used for agriculture (FAO 1996).



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**LETTERS**  
ON THE  
**ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES**  
OF  
**EDUCATION.**

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**BY ELIZABETH HAMILTON,**  
AUTHOR OF THE MEMOIRS OF MODERN PHILOSOPHERS,  
COTTAGERS OF GLENBURNIE, &c. &c.

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**VOLUME I.**

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***SIXTH EDITION.***

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**LONDON:**

**PRINTED FOR BALDWIN, CRADOCK, AND JOY; G. WILKIE;  
A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.; R. HUNTER; AND J. WALKER.**

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**1818.**

**C. Baldwin, Printer,  
New Bridge-street, London.**

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# PREFACE

TO THE

FIFTH EDITION.

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**THE** respect which is due to the purchasers of the former editions of the Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education, renders an account of the alterations that have been made in the present edition, and of the motives that led to them, not only proper, but obligatory.

To the many parents who acknowledge having derived material assistance from the work in its former state, it may afford satisfaction to be assured, that it is from an increased and confirmed conviction of the truth of the principles that were then unfolded, that the author has been led to aim at correcting such defects in the style of the writing, or in the mode of illustration, as her more ripened judgment, and more intimate knowledge of the subject, enabled her to discern.

Impressed with a deep conviction of the efficacy and importance of the principles she had

endeavoured to elucidate, she willingly listened to the proposal of the worthy bookseller\* in whom the copy-right was vested, who, in the spirit of that philanthropy which distinguished his character, wished the circulation of a work, which he believed calculated to be useful, should be extended by a reduction in its price. This could only be effected by compression or abridgment. The idea of abridgment did not correspond with the author's views: Ignorant of the difficulties attending her plan, she proposed not merely to condense the matter contained in the several letters, but to give them a new arrangement; and while she endeavoured to simplify the style, and free every part of the subject from obscurity, to introduce a few of the many observations, to which additional experience had given rise.

Had she foreseen the consequences, or made any calculation of the time and labour which it was to cost her, the design would probably have been relinquished. But now that the task is finished, she looks forward in the spirit of hope, to that rich compensation which must await her, if she has the happiness of knowing that her labours have not been altogether fruitless.

\* The late Mr. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-yard.

# LETTERS, &c.

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## LETTER I.

*Preliminary Observations.—Influence of early Association, exemplified in the Characters of the Hindoos and Americans.—Subject divided into two Branches, viz. the Culture of the Heart, and of the Understanding.—Reasons for treating of the former first.—The End and Object of Education to be thoroughly ascertained.*

WHATEVER opinion may be entertained of the degree in which the mental powers are affected by the constitutional delicacy of the female frame, there can be no doubt that women are in general endowed with intellectual capacities, sufficiently comprehensive for acquiring a knowledge of their

duties. With the progress of society, these duties increase in number and importance, and, consequently, demand that increased attention which can only spring from more enlightened intellect. This is especially the case with regard to the maternal duties; for throughout all ages, in every nation and in every stage of society, the period of life in which the moral and intellectual faculties begin to be developed, has been committed to female care.

In nations that are yet in the first stages of civilization, the duties of the mother are comprised within a narrow compass. She has only to cultivate the perceptions of her children, by increasing their senses of hearing, seeing, &c. and to excite in their hearts a few strong prejudices, which are to call certain passions into action. Her efforts being directed to the accomplishment of a certain end, are invariably crowned with success.

The same may be observed in nations pretending to civilization, but where all the

powers of the human mind have been systematically crippled and degraded by bigotry and superstition. The task of the bigot mother, is to form the character of a bigot ; and in this task she succeeds, because she is capable of comprehending all that it requires. May we not thence infer, that where more enlightened views of human character prevail, a proportional effect would be produced by education, were the object at which we aim previously ascertained ? While our notions upon this subject are vague and indistinct, the course we pursue will be too desultory to lead to those beneficial results to which the wishes of every good parent invariably point. It is however to be feared, that even good parents do not always guard against inconsistency in their wishes, with respect to the effect they desire to produce on their children's minds. They forget that the love of God and of Mammon are incompatible ; and that if the affections and desires of the heart are early and powerfully directed to the



latter, the influence of the former principle will be totally unfelt.

Of the strength of those associations which give a direction to the desires or aversions of the infant mind, we have abundant proof. It is in this respect that the influence of the mother produces the most lasting, and the most important consequences. So fully has this truth been demonstrated, that I am supported by the first authorities in asserting, that could the biographers of illustrious men attain a perfect knowledge of all they had received from early education, such a lustre would thereby be shed on the maternal character, as would render additional proofs of its influence superfluous and absurd. The causes which obstruct the operation of that influence, which the instructions of a virtuous mother ought invariably to possess, deserve our attention; and may be best understood by inquiring into the circumstances under which the most permanent associations appear to have been formed.

Whether we cast our eyes on the effeminate and indolent inhabitants of the East, or turn our attention to the more sturdy savages of the Western hemisphere, still we shall find the effects of early education too potent for time to efface, or death itself to conquer. A sensible and accomplished traveller of my own sex, after having given a concise but striking account of the religion and manners of the Hindoos, observes as follows : \*—"It is astonishing with what strictness the *Hindoos* observe these rules, *even to starving themselves to death, rather than break through them.* The children of the Hindoos are not to be tempted to eat any thing forbidden, either by persuasion, or by offering them the greatest delicacies ; which I have often been witness of." "*It is the first impression their minds receive ; they are used to seeing it strictly observed by their own and other casts ; it grows up with them as the first and most*

\* See Mrs. Kindersley's Letters from India.

absolute law, and is, perhaps, observed with more strictness than any other law, religious or civil, by any nation under the sun."

Never, surely, was the abiding influence of first impressions more evidently displayed, than in this firm and undeviating adherence to early principle, evinced by a people remarkable for feebleness of mind, and gentleness of manners. That the fortitude, or rather torpid resignation, with which this feeble race have been observed to endure the extremity of bodily suffering, may with more justice be attributed to early inspired sentiment, than to causes merely physical, is rendered obvious by the similar operation of similar causes on a people, whose character and manners are in other respects very widely different. That contempt of pain and death, which forms such a prominent feature in the character of the American savage, can by no means be ascribed to an organization and temperament similar to that of the Hindoo. It is explained by the honest traveller Charlevoix in a few words :

when, after having given some astonishing instances of the amazing constancy and firmness evinced by the savages of both sexes, in bearing the extreme of bodily torture, "suffering for many hours, and sometimes for many days together, the sharpest effects of fire, and all that the most industrious fury can invent to make it most painful, without letting a sigh escape;" he adds, "*the savages exercise themselves in this all their lives, and accustom their children to it from their tenderest years. We have seen little boys and girls tie themselves together by one arm, and tie a lighted coal between them, to see which of them would shake it off first.*"

If education can thus conquer the most powerful feelings of nature, subdue appetite, and render the soul superior to physical sensation; what may it not be expected to effect, when directed to the control of the malevolent passions, the subjection of the irregular appetites, the cultivation of intellect, and the improvement of benevo-

lence? Why, then, does the religion which teaches us to control these passions, to subdue these desires, and to cultivate these dispositions, operate less powerfully in effecting its purpose than the superstition of the Hindoos? Is it that the eternal interests of an immortal soul are of less importance in the eyes of a Christian mother, than the loss of cast is in the eyes of a Hindoo? No. There is no mother, however lost to virtue, that does not anxiously desire her child to be virtuous; nor, in the regions enlightened by the gospel, is there a mother to be found, who would willingly forfeit for her child the hopes of everlasting glory. Yet, to form in her child the dispositions essentially connected with these hopes, is as far from being the object of her care, as if no such hopes existed!

In order to explain the cause of this incongruity, we must revert to the observation with which we set out. Human intellect is confessedly, in the female pagan, and in the female savage, reduced to a low

and degraded state. But low and degraded as it is, it nevertheless enables them to comprehend and to discharge the simple duties of their situation. Susceptible of the prejudices which she deems it incumbent on her to inculcate, the Hindoo bends the force of her mind to impress upon her infants the terrors and superstitions to which she is herself enslaved. And how does she render this impression permanent, but by associating the idea of *good* with the superstitions to which she devotes him; and the idea of *evil* with the slightest deviation from the rules it prescribes? Nor is it by lessons merely, that she effects her purpose. To lessons are added the powerful influence of habit and example. The forbidden food, and the forbidden thing, is held by her in the most lively abhorrence; and while her child knows her to be willing to meet death in its most dreadful form, he constantly witnesses with what agony the bare idea of *loss of cast* convulses her otherwise unimpassioned mind. The same feelings, the

same prejudices, imbue every member of the society in which he moves, so that the impressions he receives are never upon any occasion counteracted. He becomes all that his parents, all that his country desire him to be. Under the same species of tuition, the daughters acquire all that is necessary to enable them to perform to their children the same duty which their mother has performed to them ; and for the due performance of which, the strength of their prejudices is the best security.

Let us now, for a moment, imagine the women of Hindoostan pursuing a different course. Let us suppose, that in the indulgence of maternal tenderness, they, rather than cross the inclinations of their children, permitted them to eat of what is forbidden, and to do what is prohibited by the rules of their religion, trusting to the power of formal lessons for implanting in their minds, at a future period, an abhorrence of the practices in which they were thus, during the period of infancy, indulged. Let us

likewise suppose, that the Hindoo mothers, while they continued to express by *words* their utter abhorrence of those who had, by a breach of the laws of Brama, forfeited their cast, nevertheless received, cherished, and caressed the degenerate beings whom they thus affected to condemn; and then let us ask ourselves, whether we can possibly imagine that the character of the Hindoo nations would remain unchanged, and continue uniform and stationary, as it has done, for ages?

We might pursue a similar train of reflection with regard to the savage tribes of the Western hemisphere; and supposing that by some strange revolution in sentiment, it became customary with them to inspire their children with an effeminate love of ease, and dread of pain, and to render death the object of terror to their imaginations—let us ask, whether the war song would then produce the same effect upon their minds, rousing the energies of the soul, as it now does, when every idea of glory is



connected with ideas of victory and vengeance?

That, in both the instances I have given, an important change in the national character would be produced, by such a change in the early education of infants as we have supposed to take place, cannot, I think, be doubted. The inference, indeed, does not rest upon conjecture. It is confirmed by every page in the history of mankind, and justified by the observations of those most eminent for wisdom in every age and nation.

Shall we, then, with such examples before our eyes, persist in asserting that the impressions made upon the tender mind are of no importance? or, if we admit their influence, shall we be at no pains to render them beneficial to the objects of our care?

Illumined as we are by the sun of truth, having a divine model of perfection, and a standard of morals to refer to, of which even they who doubt its divine origin confess the superior excellence;—shall we, who

are possessed of these advantages, still be guided, in the education of our children, by no higher principle than that of custom? Is it possible, that the votaries of a religion which teaches us that the due government of the heart, temper, and dispositions, is essential to our eternal well-being, should nevertheless leave the heart, temper, and dispositions of their children, to the care of chance? This surely could never be the case, but from some great deficiency in the reasoning powers, or from some generally received error, which operates to prevent their due exertion.

As the wisdom of Providence has adapted every creature to the situation it was intended to fill, we cannot doubt that the powers of the female mind are capable of expanding in such a degree, as to acquire a complete knowledge of all that is requisite to the discharge of its duties, throughout all the stages of society. It is, then, in some erroneous opinion of the nature of its duties, and not in want of capacity for

comprehending them, that we are to look for the cause of the inconsistency to which I have alluded. Nor, perhaps, is it with our own sex that the error has originated. The high estimation in which men are accustomed to hold the acquirements of learning and science, naturally disposes them to date the commencement of education from the period in which these acquirements begin to be made; and to consider the early part of existence as a blank. The human mind is ever willing to exaggerate the effects of its own exertions; and where these exertions have been solely directed to the cultivation of the understanding, we must expect to find, that whatever is great or laudable in human character will be ascribed to the fortunate circumstances, which, by opening the sources of knowledge, have aided the development of the reasoning powers. By those who argue in this manner, the propensities of the heart, whether good or bad, are considered to be innate, and the strength or weakness of the various

faculties of the mind to be altogether independent of the pains that have been taken to cherish or retard their progress. When the first years of life are thus regarded as of no importance, the character of the mother with whom they are spent comes to be of little consequence. Her duties are, indeed, on this system, reduced to a very narrow compass, extending little beyond the exercise of that instinctive tenderness, of which she has an example in all the mothers in the brute creation. With the education of her daughters she is indeed entrusted. But the same ill-founded prejudices which have deprived her of any confidence in the subsequent effect of the infant education of either sex, tend to render Fashion her sole guide and authority; nor does she question the propriety of an implicit obedience to its decrees. On the subject of education the decisions of fashion are, by such minds, deemed conclusive. Whatever tricks or accomplishments she prescribes, must, at all events, be acquired: and this even under

the consciousness of their being totally useless to the possessor ; or at least only useful during a very short portion of the short period allotted to human existence ! The parent who proceeds upon this principle, although she may not actually teach her daughters to say, FASHION, BE THOU MY GOD, by associating with the idea of fashion an idea of what is supremely good, must infallibly prepare their hearts for this species of idolatry.

Fashion has, it is true, of late years, enlarged the plan of instruction, and pressed the arts and sciences into her service. Under her auspices, rules have been laid down, and systems framed, for moulding the human mind after certain models of perfection, never exhibited to mortal eyes, but produced in abundance by the teeming brains of visionary enthusiasts. As every one of these artificial systems have, for a time, been embraced with avidity, and faithfully pursued by numbers, we can be at no loss with regard to the result of the experi-

ment. Let us look to the characters they have formed. Do we find in them any vigour of intellect ; any depth of understanding ; any of those powers of invention that are inseparable from genius ?

If instead of those, we perceive weakness and inefficiency ; minds incapable of turning the vast variety of information that has been forced upon them to any account, and yet so destitute of judgment, as to be vain of the knowledge they have not strength to digest ;—it is surely time for us to pause, and to consider whether it would not be more for the advantage of our children, to bestow attention to the development of their faculties in general, than thus to cramp and enfeeble them, in the vain hope of producing by artificial means, a supernatural excellence.

My opinions upon this subject are confirmed and supported by those of an amiable and enlightened philosopher, who observes, that “ the most essential objects of education are the two following: First, to

cultivate the various principles of our nature, both speculative and active, in such a manner as to bring them to the greatest perfection of which they are susceptible; and, secondly, by watching over the impressions and associations which the mind receives in early life, to secure it against the influence of prevailing errors, and, as far as possible, to engage its prepossessions on the side of truth." \*

In the above quotation we have a distinct view of the objects at which we ought to aim. They are twofold; including the cultivation of the heart, and of the understanding. By systems adapted only to certain situations, this can never be effected. The manufacture of accomplished ladies and finished gentlemen does not enter into a plan, which has for its object the subjection of the passions, the direction of the affections, and the cultivation of the faculties that are common to the whole human

\* See Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

race. In my attempt to render some assistance to parents, who agree with me in considering these objects as of primary importance, I shall give precedence to the examination of those desires and aversions which are the springs of action, because their influence commences, in some measure, with our existence. In the production of our intellectual faculties, nature operates by a slow and gradual process; but desire and aversion appear in the early dawn of life, and show symptoms of strength and vigour at a period when most of the intellectual faculties are yet feeble and imperfect.

That the direction given to desire and aversion must conduct to virtue or to vice, is a consideration so serious, as to call our attention to every minute circumstance by which it can be influenced. And if it be by means of early and powerful associations that the desires and aversions of the heart are principally excited, it necessarily follows, that to watch over the associations that are



formed in the infant mind, becomes the first and most momentous of the maternal duties. Nor, towards the due performance of this duty, is any great degree of mental cultivation, or any extraordinary abilities, requisite. The woman who would educate her children with success, must, indeed, be endowed with sense sufficient to enable her to reflect upon the motives which actuate her own conduct, and to examine into the tempers and dispositions of her own mind. Never must she for a moment fail to recollect, that with those objects to which her own desires invariably point, her children will naturally associate the idea of good; and with those which excite her aversion, they will connect the idea of evil. And that these associations, if not counteracted, will, without doubt, have an influence on the future character.

In this point of view, the importance of early education is far greater than we can possibly calculate. Were the prejudices which prevent the due consideration of its

importance to be happily removed, it would become a primary object of solicitude to the Christian and the patriot, to raise the female mind to a sense of the dignity of a situation, which enables it not only to effect the happiness or misery of individuals, but to influence the character of nations, and ameliorate the condition of the human race. When we observe how ineffectually, throughout all ages, wisdom has laboured by her instructive lessons, to restrain the passions, which in infancy might have been subdued; to awaken the affections, which in infancy might have been cherished; and to invigorate those intellectual energies, which ought in infancy to have been exercised, it will not seem hyperbolic to assert, that if mothers were universally qualified for the proper performance of these important duties, it would do more towards the progressive improvement of the human race, than all the discoveries of science, and researches of philosophy!

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## LETTER II.

*Use of the Term Association.—Associations productive of Aversion.—Their Tendency to Malevolence, illustrated by Examples.*

ON the first publication of these letters, I found that many of my learned friends were greatly alarmed at the familiar use I had made of the term *association*. They assured me, it was only by the learned that my book could be understood ; and as it was certainly not for the learned that it was intended, I could not avoid being vexed and mortified by the assertion. At length, however, I ventured to trust to my own observation, which soon convinced me that my learned friends had greatly over-rated the distance, in respect of understanding, between them and the less informed ; and

that the ideas expressed by the term *association*, were as easily comprehended by every person of plain sense, as by the scholar and metaphysician.

A mother who pays the least attention to what passes in the minds of her children, will perceive that the sight of the cup which has been appropriated to the bitter draughts of the apothecary, produces instant symptoms of aversion, and that the box which holds the favourite comfit is no sooner produced than the eye sparkles with delight. She knows that these opposite effects are produced by the opposite ideas of pain and pleasure; and when told that the principle which connects with the cup the idea of what is nauseous, and with the box the idea of what is palatable, is termed *association*, she becomes mistress of the subject at a glance.

Instead, therefore, of wasting time in unnecessary explanations, I shall proceed to show that early associations have always

a powerful, and often a permanent influence on the mind; and that, according to the nature of the passions they excite, and of the affections they produce, the character will be formed to vice or virtue; prepared for the enjoyment of happiness, or for the pursuit of selfish indulgence.

When we consider that the strength of every passion depends on its connection with the selfish principle, and that every passion which is directly selfish tends to produce malignity, we must perceive that the control of the passions ought, in education, to be the first object of our care. But in proportion as we endeavour to check the malign influence of the passions, we must endeavour to produce and to cherish the generous and benevolent affections; for we may rest assured, that where these are habitually exercised, the baleful influence of the passions will be unknown.

“ But the passions of children,” you will say, “ are only momentary, and consequently

harmless. Besides, how, until they acquire the use of reason, can we teach them to control them?"

Permit me to ask in my turn, if the impressions received in early life have no permanent effect in promoting the passions, why do you warn your servants against terrifying your children by tales of ghosts and hobgoblins? In this instance you will allow the influence of early impressions to be formidable; for you know that many persons are unfortunately, to the latest period of their lives, slaves to the terrors of darkness, in consequence of those associations which connected the ideas of darkness with objects that were terrifying to the imagination.

And is the fear of ghosts and hobgoblins the only false and permanent association of which the mind is in infancy susceptible? Alas! a thousand others, of no less fatal tendency, are often then received, engendering prejudices no less dangerous and indelible.

To be able to examine and to decide on the tendency of impressions, does, indeed, seem to require a knowledge of the human mind, which few mothers in the common path of life can be supposed to possess. I say, *seem to require*, for in reality it requires nothing more than strict attention to the subject, directed by that experience which a knowledge of one's own mind, and common observation on the characters of others, must bestow. The more enlightened our understandings, the more enlarged the sphere of our observation, with so much greater facility shall we be enabled to trace, with so much greater certainty to decide, on the consequences of associations. But it is not to want of knowledge or ability, that our deficiency is most commonly to be ascribed. It is our own indolence, our own selfishness, our unwillingness to counteract our own prejudices, that prevent us from applying the degree of understanding and information we possess. For a standard whereby to judge of the tendency of asso-

ciations, no Christian mother can be at a loss. She, indeed, whose notions of religion extend a little further than to the mere forms of the sect in which she was educated, will here be found to possess a very great advantage. In the spirit of that morality which is without spot or blemish, she will find an infallible guide; and if she conscientiously endeavours to prevent all associations in the minds of her children that are at variance with that spirit, she does as much as it is in her power to do for their future happiness.

Every additional ray of light thrown upon the investigation of the human mind, tends to increase our faith in him who "spake as never man spake;" who, in all the observations he made, and in all the precepts he delivered, evinced such a perfect knowledge of the human heart, as could only be obtained by him who had immediate access to all its secret springs.

"Ye know not what spirit ye are of," said this all-perfect Judge of human action,



to his zealous friends. Neither can we know what spirit we are of, or what spirit the impressions we make upon the infant mind may hereafter produce, unless we examine and try them by the test that is offered in the spirit of the gospel. If we would sedulously preserve our children from error, let us in the first place bring our own prejudices to the test. Nor let us think the task beneath us. "There are few individuals (says Stewart) whose education has been conducted in every respect with attention and judgment. Almost every man of reflection is conscious, when he arrives at maturity, of many defects in his mental powers, and of many inconvenient habits, which might have been prevented or remedied in his infancy or youth. Such a consciousness is the first step towards improvement; and the person who feels it, if he is possessed of resolution and steadiness, will not scruple to begin a new course of education for himself.—It is never too late (he adds) to think of the improvement of

our faculties." It is never too late, I would add, to examine our opinions with attention; so that we may be able to discriminate between those which have been adopted by the understanding on a rational conviction of their truth, and those that are the offspring of false associations deeply impressed upon our minds in early life. Without such an examination of our opinions, we shall, in educating our children, be but perpetuating the reign of prejudice and error. If even in our religious sentiments or feelings there are any that will not stand the test I have mentioned, though we may not immediately be able to detect their fallacy, we ought, at least, to beware of inculcating them; lest by associating with the sacred name of religion false and injurious impressions of the Deity, or malevolence and ill-will towards any part of his creation, we inadvertently lay the foundation of a blind and superstitious bigotry, or perhaps of that very scepticism, against which we, with so much zeal, but so little judgment, attempt to guard.

The power of association over the mental faculties is extremely obvious: but I shall postpone the consideration of it, till we come to treat of the cultivation of the understanding; and at present confine myself to an examination of those early associations which affect the heart.\* The influence of these has not, I believe, been generally attended to so much as the importance of the subject seems to require. How far the primary passions of love and hatred, with their several dependent passions, may be, and actually are, influenced by early association, it shall now be my endeavour to explain by the most obvious and familiar examples.

\* The reader will observe, that in making the heart the seat of the passions, I make use of the popular language, without contending for its propriety; it is sufficient for my purpose that it is intelligible.

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### LETTER III.

*Examination of the Associations which produce Passions of the malevolent Class.—Consequences of early Impressions of Terror.—The Nature of Timidity investigated.—The Fear of Death, the Consequences of early Association.—Examples.*

THE first class of associations that comes under our consideration, are those which are rendered permanent by means of strong sensation. These are chiefly, if not entirely, of the painful kind; the sensations that excite aversion being much stronger than those which produce pleasure; and as hatred is one of the malevolent passions, every association which produces it is particularly deserving of our attention. Fear and hatred are naturally connected; and may be observed, in many instances, mutually to excite each other. "Perfect love," saith the

apostle, "casteth out fear." We may likewise reverse the proposition, and with equal truth aver, that perfect or complete fear casteth out love, or, in other words, destroys the principle of benevolence.

It is, however, only by gross mismanagement that fear is nurtured into a passion productive of the evil I have ascribed to it; for in infancy it appears as an instinct implanted by the wise Creator to guard the feeble and inexperienced being from the dangers to which it might be exposed, while as yet ignorant of the nature and properties of the objects by which it is surrounded. But a foolish nurse no sooner observes that the infant mind is susceptible of terror, than she applies the discovery to the worst of purposes. It is the first, the constant engine of tyranny; and, in proportion as it is made to operate, the mind will be enfeebled and debased.

In one of the woes denounced against a sinful people in Scripture, it is declared by the Prophet, "*that they shall be afraid*

where no fear is." I can scarcely form an idea of a greater calamity; and yet to this calamity is many an innocent being exposed by the injudicious treatment of the nursery. Of the many happy methods employed to induce a quiet submission to the arbitrary decrees of the nurse, notice has been taken in a work of much deserved celebrity. However I may take the liberty of differing in some points from the able and ingenious authors of that treatise, I consider it, upon the whole, as an inestimable treasure of useful hints and sensible observations; and therefore, earnestly recommend it to your attentive perusal. In the chapter to which I have alluded, the injudicious method employed, to quiet the clamours which have been injudiciously excited, are considered with regard to their tendency towards hurting the temper. In addition to this evil of mighty magnitude, I consider the frequent employment of the engine of terror as having a tendency to debilitate the powers of the

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\* The Author is obliged to  
 leave, forgetting that there  
 is a certain number born

mind, and to introduce malevolence and selfishness into the dispositions of the heart.

Timidity, when considered merely as an enemy to vigorous exertion, will be found an obstacle to every species of excellence; as by fettering the mind it is particularly friendly to prejudice, and inimical to truth. That self-possession, which seems the inheritance of great minds, is, in reality, but the triumph of reason over the passions of surprise and fear; which, on no emergency, can be promptly conquered by minds accustomed to the early dominion of terror. It surely, then, is our business to guard as much as possible against the early introduction of a passion, which is, in its excess, equally injurious to happiness and virtue.

“ This may be all very truly observed,” you will perhaps say, “ with regard to boys; but in females, timidity appears so graceful and engaging, that in them it ought by all means to be encouraged.”

I beg your pardon; I thought we were speaking of the best method of cultivating the powers of *human beings*, so as to bring to the greatest perfection of which they are capable; and of watching over the impressions and associations of early life, so as to preserve it from the influence of prevailing errors.\* In this I can make no distinction of sex; it being my opinion, that the mind which is most sedulously preserved from the influence of prejudice, will be best prepared for pursuing the line of conduct best adapted to its situation and circumstances. Females are, indeed, seldom placed in those where the exertion of *active* courage is required. Whatever is unnecessary is absurd; the affectation of it is disgusting. But of that passive courage which takes the name of fortitude, where is the woman, who, in some period of life, is not called on for its exertion?

\* See Letter I.



By the delicacy of her frame, exposed to inevitable suffering from bodily pain, ought not her mind to be strengthened to support it with firmness? Unhappy the friends, doubly unhappy the attendants, who are doomed to listen to the querulous murmurs of *amiable weakness* under the pressure of bodily infirmity. Here, I believe, it would be readily excused, even by the most strenuous advocate for the charms of feminine imbecility. But having once deprived the mind of strength and energy, we must take all the consequences; of these, the incapacity of supporting pain with any degree of firmness is, perhaps, not the worst. The selfishness almost always connected with extreme timidity of temper, is a consequence we should still more strongly deprecate. Active benevolence requires a degree of resolution, a dereliction of *self*, to which the timid can never attain. Let us compare the two by examples from real life.

Is it an uncommon thing to see a lady, who is the slave of foolish fears with regard to her own personal safety, show very little concern for the safety of others? I have seen one who, if a cow but looked at her in her walks, would scream with terror, and run from it as she would from a Bengal tiger: yet, with great *sang froid*, permit her child to face the formidable animal, and turn it from the path!

It is the nature of cowardice and pusillanimity, to direct the mind exclusively to the attention of *self*. On a mind thus occupied, the sufferings of others can make no impression; nor can the social or sympathetic affections, in such circumstances, exert their influence over the heart. How mistaken is it, then, to confound the idea of *gentleness*, of which the feelings of benevolence and complacency are the constituents, with that cowardice which is the consequence of an unmixed regard to self!

Permit me to illustrate the union of gentleness and fortitude by an apt example, with which my memory now furnishes me.

Mrs. B. a lady whose gentleness arose from the pure source of Christian meekness and unbounded philanthropy, after having suffered with unrepining patience the painful progress of a cancer, was advised to submit to an operation, from which a faint hope of cure was entertained by her medical friends. It happened that one of her servants (I believe her kitchen-maid) had, about the same time, contracted a white swelling on her knee, for which amputation was pronounced the only remedy. During the progress of her disorder, Mrs. B. took infinite pains to strengthen the weaker mind of her fellow-sufferer, and to bring her to that calm resignation to the Divine will, of which she was herself so bright an example. At length the day appointed for the performance of the two operations arrived. The amiable mistress,

who was mother of a large family, spent the morning in giving such admonitions to her children, and such instructions concerning them, as were suggested by a sound understanding, a pious mind, and a benevolent heart. But not even the affecting idea of a last interview (for so she considered it) with her beloved children, could so far conquer her feelings as to render her forgetful of the poor sufferer above-stairs, whose feeble mind was in agonies of apprehension at the near prospect of the dreaded event. She sent to her several messages of consolation before the arrival of the surgeons, and after she had with heroic fortitude endured the cruel torture of an unsuccessful operation, the first, almost the only words, she uttered, were to desire an attendant to inform Peggy, *that the pain was not nearly so great as she had expected!* Let us compare the magnanimity of this conduct with the selfish concern of a dastardly and timid spirit, and declare to which of the two we should

give the preference. If the former has any claim upon our admiration and esteem, we shall not hesitate about the propriety of preserving our girls, as well as boys, from the dominion of feelings which destroy energy, and impair benevolence.

Let the gentleness of the female mind be such as springs from a genuine and proper source. It will then be connected, not with the cruel family of hatred, to which fear is allied, but with that of humility, meekness, and modesty. For let it ever be remembered, that every strong impression which the mind receives, disposes it to the reception of kindred impressions; and that as love, hope, joy, and all the amiable passions and affections, enhance each other, so do the ungrateful and unamiable ones of fear, hatred, and aversion, with all their odious attendants of suspicion, jealousy, and revenge.

Timidity is by some considered as not only graceful in the female character, but as *necessary* to prevent the consequences of

that rashness to which girls may be exposed by their inexperience of the world. For this I consider humility, and its companion diffidence, to be infinitely more effectual. Timidity, as far as I have been able to observe, has generally been rather productive of rashness. Where the affections are interested, it requires no small degree of *courage*, to examine all the possible consequences of a material step. At these the timid dare not look. Obstinate shutting their eyes, they blindly leap into the gulf, and often, alas! do they perceive, when it is too late, that cowardice impelled their ruin.

Another effect of extreme timidity of temper is, in a moral view, well worthy of our attentive consideration. *The timid seldom will be found sincere.* Cunning is the constant refuge of cowardice; it is the despicable weapon of pusillanimous minds to counteract what they dare not openly oppose. How contemptible is the tergiversation so often detected in those, who

from timidity applaud that which in their hearts they condemn! Into what deplorable dilemmas are the rash and timid frequently betrayed! The character of St. Peter, as given in the Gospels, is a beautiful example. Nor is he, alas! the only one whom timidity has betrayed to actions for which they have had cause to "*wesp bitterly.*"

That cowardice may sometimes be a constitutional defect, I cannot take upon me to deny; but that it is often an adventitious and acquired one, I think we may venture to assert; and as it may frequently be traced to strong impressions made on the infant mind, producing associations that are permanent and indelible, we must allow that it has a sufficient claim upon our attention.

"But how is it possible," you will say, "to guard against the improper conduct of nurses and nursery-maids? One cannot be always with one's children."

The watchful eye of a prudent mother may do much. Convince your servants, that to preserve your children from the influence of terror is an object of importance in your mind: attentively observe the first appearance of its effects, nor let it pass without an examination into the cause: make them sensible from experience, that children may be prevented from touching what is hurtful, by other means than telling them *it will bite them*; and that making it a constant rule never to give them what they obstinately cry for will be found a far more efficacious remedy, than to call for the old man or the black dog, who is to come down the chimney for naughty children. What an excellent foundation for the principles of moral rectitude is the common mode of nursery education! To allure or to frighten children into a compliance with our will, we employ a system of falsehood, and then we expect them to speak the truth! If symptoms of a contrary disposition appear at an early period,



we never advert to the thousand lies they have from the cradle heard us utter, many of which were too palpable to escape the detection of even infantine sagacity: we never consider the associations we have thus excited, but immediately lay all the blame upon poor human nature! Without entering into any controversy concerning original depravity, I think I may venture to assert, that managing children by the arts of deceit and falsehood in infancy, is a bad preparative for those lessons on truth, which we are afterwards at so much pains to impress. But this will come to be considered with more propriety hereafter. Let us now return to the subject of terror, which is of too much importance to be yet dismissed.

Having discarded from our service all imaginary instruments of vengeance, you will perhaps apprehend, that the children may become unmanageable; and from their want of experience, and the possession of that courage which has never been repress-

ed, may expose themselves to danger. To avoid this, it is only necessary, that wherever *real* danger occurs, it should be calmly explained in terms that are intelligible to the infant capacity; but free from all that vociferous exaggeration, which, by the impression it makes, tends to connect a strong idea of terror with the object, without any discriminating apprehension why that terror is excited. Nor should I be at all unwilling to permit the child to ascertain the truth of my admonitory cautions by its own experience, where it could only incur the risk of a trifling inconvenience; as by such experience it will receive rational and distinct ideas of the nature of objects, neither injuring the mind by false images of terror, nor permitting it a second time to suffer from the temerity of ignorance.

Children being early accustomed to paddle their hands in cold water with impunity, cannot easily be made to comprehend the nature of the danger they are told to

dread in meddling with hot. The painted figure upon the china cup they have been told would bite them, if they touched it; but they have ventured, and, contrary to the assertion of the nurse, have touched it without injury. Little confidence can they, therefore, place in what she advances. From the smoking of the hot water alone they cannot learn its nature; but by giving the finger such a slight dip into it as occasions some degree of pain, it becomes at once intelligible. How many shocking accidents might be thus prevented! A child who from experience knew the nature of the danger that awaited him, would not rashly overturn a tea-urn, or set his frock on fire.

I once saw a gentleman (very wisely as I thought, though very cruelly in the opinion of some others of the spectators) dip his son, then a boy in petticoats, into a pond in the garden, which had long been a subject of disquiet to the anxious mother, who had observed her darling's predilec-

tion for this favourite spot. In spite of her remonstrances and injunctions, no sooner did this infant Narcissus find himself at liberty, than he ran to the side of the pond, and kneeling down stretched over to view the pretty baby in the water. In this position he was found by his father ; who, taking him up in his arms, and explaining to him the nature of his danger, calmly told him he should now judge for himself of the truth of what he said, and then very deliberately plunged him into the water; by which seeming cruelty, it is more than probable, he saved the life of his child.

Let a child who has been instructed in the nature of danger from his own experience, but whose mind has never been weakened by repeated sensations of terror, and one whose infant education has been conducted upon principles exactly contrary, be both for the first time presented with a new and striking object. Observe the grave and penetrating looks of the former, while he sagaciously examines the

appearance of the object before him, in order to form a judgment of its qualities. After having looked at it on every side, he ventures, though with much caution, to submit it to his touch. Finding it every way harmless, he becomes reconciled to it, and dismisses all apprehension. While the poor infant who has been accustomed to quake at unknown phantoms presented to his imagination, associates this strong though undefined idea of evil with every new object of uncommon appearance, and, without venturing on examination, gives vent to his feelings in shrieks and lamentations. Are the minds of these two children equally prepared for entering on that most material part of education, which must be derived from experience? How many sources of information are open to the one, which to the other are by his fears shut up! And is it not probable, that a great and decided difference will mark their characters through life?

If we analyse the slavish fear of death, which constitutes no trifling portion of human misery, we shall often find it impossible to be accounted for on any other grounds than those of early association. Frequently does this slavish fear operate in the bosoms of those who know not the pangs of an accusing conscience, and whose spirits bear them witness, that they have reason to have hope and confidence toward GOD. But in vain do reason and religion speak peace to the soul of him whose first ideas of death have been accompanied with strong impressions of terror. The association thus formed is too powerful to be broken; and the only resource, to which minds under its influence generally resort, is to drive the subject from their thoughts as much as possible. To this cause we may attribute the unwillingness which many people evince toward making a settlement of their affairs; not that they entertain the superstitious notion of accelerating the hour of their death by making

a will ; but that the aversion to the subject of death is so strong in their minds, that they feel a repugnance to the consideration of whatever is even remotely connected with it.

How often the same association operates in deterring from the serious contemplation of a future state, we must leave to the consciences of individuals to determine. Its tendency to enfeeble the mind, and its consequences in detracting from the happiness of life, are obvious to common observation ; but as every subject of this nature is best elucidated by examples, I shall beg leave to introduce two from real life, in which the importance of early association will, I trust, be clearly illustrated.

The first instance I shall give of the abiding influence of strong impressions received in infancy, is in the character of a lady who is now no more ; and who was too eminent for piety and virtue to leave any doubt of her being now exalted to the enjoyment of that felicity, which her en-

feebled mind, during its abode on earth, never dared to contemplate. The first view she had of death in infancy was accompanied with peculiar circumstances of terror, and this powerful impression was, by the injudicious language of the nursery, aggravated and increased, till the idea of death became associated with all the images of horror which the imagination could conceive. Although born of a noble family, her education was strictly pious; but the piety which she witnessed was tinged with fanaticism, and had little in it of that divine spirit of "love, which casteth out fear." Her understanding was naturally excellent; or, in other words, what is in our sex generally termed masculine; and it was improved by the advantages of a very superior education. But not all the advantages she derived from nature or cultivation, not all the strength of a sound judgment, nor all the sagacity of a penetrating and cultivated genius, could coun-



teract the association, which rendered the idea of death a subject of perpetual terror to her mind. Exemplary in the performance of every religious and every social duty, full of faith and of good works, she never dared to dart a glance of hope beyond the tomb. The gloomy shadows that hovered over the regions of death made the heart recoil from the salutary meditation; and when sickness brought the subject to her view, her whole soul was involved in a tumult of horror and dismay. In every illness it became the business of her family and friends to devise methods of concealing from her the real danger. Every face was then dressed in forced smiles, and every tongue employed in the repetition of flattering falsehoods. To mention the death of any person in her presence, became a sort of petit treason in her family; and from the pains that were taken to conceal every event of this kind from her knowledge, it was easy to conjecture how much

was to be dreaded from the direful effect such information would infallibly produce. She might, indeed, be said

“ To die a thousand deaths in fearing one ; ”

and had often suffered much more from the apprehension, than she could have suffered from the most agonizing torture that ever attended the hour of dissolution.

Here we have an instance of a noble mind subjected by means of early association to the most cruel bondage. Let us now take a view of the consequences of impressing the mind with more agreeable associations on the same subject, at the same early period.

A friend of mine, on expressing his admiration of the cheerfulness and composure which a lady of his acquaintance had invariably shown on the threatened approach of death, was thus answered : “ The fortitude you so highly applaud, I indeed acknowledge as the first and greatest of blessings, for to it I owe the enjoyment of

all the mercies, which a good Providence has graciously mingled in the cup of suffering. But I take no merit to myself on its account. It is not, as you suppose, the magnanimous effort of reason; and however it may be supported by that religious principle, which inspires hope, and teaches resignation, while I see those who are my superiors in every Christian grace and virtue appalled by the terrors of death, I cannot to religion alone attribute my superior fortitude. For that fortitude I am, under GOD, chiefly indebted to the judicious friend of my infancy, who made the idea of death not only familiar but pleasant to my imagination. The sudden death of an elderly lady, to whom I was much attached, gave her an opportunity, before I had attained my sixth year, of impressing this subject on my mind in the most agreeable colours.

“ To this judicious management I attribute much of that serenity, which, on the apprehended approach of death, has ever possessed my mind. Had the idea been

first impressed upon my imagination with its usual gloomy accompaniments, it is probable that it would still have been there invested in robes of terror; nor would all the efforts of reason, nor all the arguments of religion, have been able in these moments effectually to tranquillize my soul. Nor is it only in the hour of real danger, that I have experienced the good effects of this freedom from the slavish fear of death; it has saved me from a thousand petty alarms and foolish apprehensions, into which people of stronger minds than I can boast are frequently betrayed, by the involuntary impulse of terror. So much, my good friend, we all owe to early education."

Philosophy had no sooner explained the optical defect of squinting, than a reformation took place in every nursery, and the position of every cradle was carefully attended to. Is the mind, then, so comparatively unimportant? or are the impressions made upon it by strong and powerful

sensation, to a certainty, less durable than those made upon the optic nerve? A very little reflection will convince us of the contrary.

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## LETTER IV.

### ASSOCIATIONS of AVERSION continued.

*Danger of early inspired Antipathies.—The Natural Prejudice examined.—Its injurious Effects upon Mind.—Examples and Observations.*

HAVING noticed the effect of those violent sensations of terror, which are too often inflicted on the infant mind, let us now discuss the subject of aversions and antipathies to particular objects, which we have been accustomed, without hesitation, to attribute to Nature.

When we take a view of the instinctive faculties of animals, and observe how admirably they are adapted to the preservation of the species and the individual, according to its situation and circumstances; and when we consider how much, in the

infancy of society, Man must be inevitably exposed to danger, from the bite of noxious animals; it does not, at first view, seem inconsistent with the order of Providence, that he should be provided with a similar defence, and be taught by natural antipathy to avoid what is hurtful. But is this actually the case? And does it not rather appear, that the principle of imitation, so deeply implanted in our natures, and so suited to the circumstances of man, as a social animal, is intended by our wise Creator as a substitute for that instinct, in which the inferior orders of creation have so much the advantage of us? That this is indeed the case, evidently, as I think, appears from the conduct of individuals; which, with regard to the objects of aversion, is so far from being guided by the steady and unerring impulse of instinct, that it most frequently seems the offspring of unaccountable caprice. To those, indeed, who have observed the power of sympathy, and the influence of imitation, it will not be unaccountable. Let a child see

a frog for the first time in company with a person who has no aversion to the species, who praises the beauty of its skin, admires its agility, and mentions its inoffensiveness with sympathy and tenderness; the child will be delighted with its appearance, and attach to it no more idea of disgust than he does to that of a robin red-breast. But alter these circumstances, and let him at the first sight of the frog hear a shriek of terror from his mamma, or some female friend; let him see her run from it with abhorrence, and hear her mention it with disgust, and it is ten to one the association thus formed will remain fixed for life.

While sitting in an alcove in a friend's garden last summer, I saw a darling little girl, whose mind had been happily preserved from the early dominion of *pæjudice*, busily employed in collecting pebbles (as I thought) and putting them in her frock, which she had gathered up and held in one hand as a receptacle for her treasure. Ob-



serving me, she came running toward me with a joyful countenance: "See!" cried she, "See! what a number of beautiful creatures I have got here!" emptying at the same time the contents of her lap upon mine—a number of large black beetles! I confess I could have excused the present; nor could I behold the harmless creatures crawling on me without shuddering. I had, however, resolution enough to conceal my sensations; and after thanking my little friend for her kindness, begged she would replace them in her frock, that she might put them down where she had found them, so that they might find their way to their families. Delighted with the employment, in which I could not prevail on myself to assist her, she soon freed me from my disagreeable companions; and while I watched the expression of her animated countenance, I could not help reflecting on the injury I had sustained from that early association, which could still

thus operate upon my mind in defiance of the control of reason. An aversion to black beetles, it is true, will not often interfere with our happiness, or with the comfort of those with whom we associate; but why, in any instance, should we injure the mind by false and fictitious prejudices? The recurrence of these painful sensations (and what sensations are more painful than those of fear and aversion?) deduct much from the pleasure of life. They mislead the understanding, and warp the judgment, and are consequently injurious to the sanity of the mind; and yet how little are they guarded against in education? Suffer me, then, my Friend, to recommend it to your consideration. Watch, I beseech you, the early operation of the mind; and if you observe any symptom of its having caught, by contagion, any of those antipathies so falsely denominated *natural*, make it your business, by counteracting, to destroy the association which excited them. In the education of brutes we see this done

every day with success; and, indeed, from the education of brutes many useful hints on the subject of association might be derived; nor, where they offer, ought we to scorn to avail ourselves of them.

Besides these false and foolish antipathies to certain objects of sense, which are at an early period fixed in the mind, there are others more indistinct and undefined, which, instead of guarding against, we are often at pains to instil for our amusement, without considering the consequences to which they may probably lead.

Before we proceed to their investigation, it may be proper to make a few previous remarks on the nature and tendency of prejudice in general.

Prejudice may, I think, be defined to be, desire or aversion attached to certain objects or opinions, by means of strong but unexamined associations. To render virtue the object of love, and vice the object of hatred, is the aim and end of moral education. But if infinite pains be not taken to guard the

mind against hasty and precipitate judgments, it will often associate with the ideas of vice and virtue, circumstances that are foreign and indifferent; and by this means, love and hatred will be improperly called forth.

The religious and political opinions of the greater part of mankind, having been embraced without much previous examination, are persevered in merely by means of their having been strongly associated with the ideas of propriety, utility, or truth. Accustomed from infancy to consider the sect or party in which we have been educated as the most perfect, or rather as the compendium of all perfection, we attach the idea of wrong to all who have embraced opinions that are opposite. Nor are the exclusive ideas of *right* and *wrong* confined to opinions or principles; they extend to every non-essential form and ceremony, which custom has established in our own sect, or rendered peculiar to others. The more we examine this point, we shall be

the more convinced, that it is from association alone, that non-essential forms and ceremonies derive their importance.

The operation of this principle, in a cultivated and benevolent mind, will produce an involuntary preference of the established forms and ceremonies to which it has been accustomed, without influencing the judgment to a belief of their absolute superiority. But where, by means of early association, the idea of *evil* has been strongly connected with opinions opposite to our own, the same association will extend its influence to every minute circumstance; rendering forms and ceremonies, that are in themselves indifferent, obnoxious and hateful. Where the sphere of observation is much confined, these prejudices take such deep root in the heart, as appears surprising to those whose minds have been liberalized by a more extensive intercourse with the world. They, indeed, behold the operations of prejudice on a grander scale: for every day presents them with oppor-

tunities of observing its baleful influence on the peace, the virtue, and the happiness of society.

As all the passions are strengthened by sympathy, the associations which produce hatred and ill-will become more powerful and more pernicious in society than in retirement. The man who, in his individual capacity, would shudder at cruelty or injustice, does not scruple to defend the cruelty and injustice exercised by the party he has espoused. In every party dispute, "partiality and prejudice act and re-act like the waves of the troubled sea, until they are worked up to a tremendous storm;"—a storm, which, alas! too frequently overwhelms the purest innocence and most exalted virtue.

The influence of the passions upon the opinions belongs to another part of my subject; it is sufficient for my present purpose to show, that the first ideas of right and wrong may, by means of false and impro-

per associations, be productive of personal hatred; and that to encourage personal hatred, is to introduce into the disposition a tendency to all the malevolent passions.

When reason is heard, and religion exerts its influence on our breasts, we do not scruple to acknowledge, that *from every idea of perfection the idea of malevolence is totally excluded.* We likewise confess, that every degree of benevolence becomes a proportional source of happiness to the benevolent: nay, that in unbounded benevolence the moral attributes of the Supreme Being are comprehended; but such is the powerful influence of early prejudice, that we applaud ourselves as exercising a virtuous indignation against vice, in our indiscriminate hatred of all who differ from us; without reflecting, that by thus indulging the spirit of malevolence, we are rendering ourselves guilty in the eyes of that Being, in whose service we erroneously imagine our zeal to be exerted.

Nor is a disposition to prejudice less inimical to the cultivation of the mental faculties, than to the exercise of the moral. Few people, who have made any progress in the improvement of their understandings, will hesitate to acknowledge, that they have often prejudged the tendency of opinions, which, on examination, they have adopted from a conviction of their truth; they have often been obliged to admire what they had previously condemned, and to condemn the subject of their former admiration.

It is, perhaps, one of the greatest advantages to be derived from history, that it gives us an opportunity of observing the force of the prejudices above alluded to, in the violent contentions that have, at different periods, agitated the world, concerning objects which to us appear futile and ridiculous. From the change that has taken place in our associations, these objects are now stripped of their importance;



and we wonder at their ever having been the occasion of hatred and bloodshed, among those who were commanded "to love as brethren." But do we never suffer ourselves to be influenced by the same spirit, and to hate, with the same vivacity, those who differ from us in points, which, in a few years, will likewise be consigned to oblivion, or only found in the pages of the historian.

If from these considerations, added to the thousand other instances your own reflections must suggest, it appears that deep-rooted prejudice is inimical to our mental and moral faculties, it only remains to show, whether, by preserving the infant mind from contracting the habits that lead to its formation, we may not in some degree prevent the effects we deprecate.

"*I hate demotats!*" says a little boy, whose organs of speech cannot yet be formed to the word; and "*I abhor aristocats,*" says another urchin, with equal

symptoms of zeal and aversion. Perhaps the parents of the first think they are thus imprinting the principles of loyalty in the breast of their son; while those of the latter, with an equal degree of judgment, imagine they are sowing the seeds of patriotism in theirs. They are equally deceived. All the idea that either of them can give to the infant mind, is, *that something is to be hated*; that there are descriptions of their fellow-creatures, whom it is their duty to abhor. They learn to hate, or to say they hate, they know not what; and this facility of hatred, while it assists the growth of pride and indolence, is a fatal blight in the opening bud of virtue.

Those who agree with me in the propriety of making the morals taught by JESUS CHRIST, and his Apostles, their guide and standard, will surely not hesitate to pronounce the cultivation of the feelings of hatred to be incompatible with duty.

But it is not enough, that we refrain from inculcating the principles of hatred;

we must carefully preserve them from those associations which lead to it. On this account, we ought to watch over our own expressions of disapprobation and contempt. All national reflections and general censures ought to be avoided in the presence of children; and, indeed, I believe it often happens, that these are most severe, when, if we would examine our minds, we should find that the indignation which excites them has its foundation in some early prejudice, which has been implicitly adopted, and is on that very account the more obstinately adhered to. Whether we acknowledge this to be the case or not, I believe it would be well for our children, if in their presence we observed the example of the archangel, who, as St. Jude informs us, when contending with Satan himself, "brought not a railing accusation against him."

A little girl, who for the first time of her life was present at a political dispute, gave, in my opinion, an admirable reproof to one of the angry declaimers, who had

poured forth a torrent of abuse against the leaders of an opposite faction, which he concluded by declaring, with much vehemence, that he hated them all. "O fy, Sir!" said the infant, looking earnestly up in his face, "we should hate nothing but sin, you know." "And what is sin, my dear?" said the political champion, a little out of countenance by her remark, "It is not doing as we are bid," replied the child with great simplicity.

Next to the feelings of hatred and antipathy, we may mention those of contempt; feelings which are caught from sympathy, long before they are generated by the pride and vanity of the human heart. A habit of speaking contemptuously of others argues much self-complacency, operating upon a weak and unfurnished mind. Upon a hearer of an opposite character, it never operates to the disadvantage of the person spoken of, but leaves an impression of the envy and malevolence of the speaker. On the minds of children, however, its effects

are more pernicious. They cannot learn to speak with contempt, even of the lowest individual, without acquiring some degree of that self-complacency which is nearly allied to pride. When they discover their own superiority to a companion, pains should be taken to point out to them somewhat in which that companion excels them; not to excite envy, but to quell the first feelings of pride. They ought, on no account, to be permitted to make personal defects the subject of ridicule; nor should the ignorance even of a servant be mentioned before them in such a way as to excite contempt.

There does not, perhaps, occur, on the whole subject of education, a point of greater difficulty than this with regard to servants. It is forcibly pointed out by Locke, who, after mentioning the pernicious consequences resulting from their communication with children, candidly acknowledges, that it is a hard matter wholly

to prevent this mischief." Miss Edgeworth cuts the knot at once: and absolute unqualified prohibition of all intercourse between the children of the family and domestics of every denomination, is by her recommended, and enforced by examples of some weight, and arguments of much ingenuity.

To differ from such authorities may appear presumptuous; but authorities, however respectable, ought not to fetter the mind, so as to prevent the freedom of investigation. Physicians may agree in the nature of a patient's disease, and in their opinion of his danger; but if a very violent remedy be proposed, a conscientious practitioner will consider, whether it may not produce effects as fatal to the constitution of the patient, as the disease it is intended to cure. In this light appears to me the mandate of prohibition above alluded to.

Were knowledge, indeed, the one thing needful, and did the cultivation of the

heart form but a secondary part of our plan of education, we might, without scruple, prepossess the minds of our pupils against the vulgar and the ignorant. But as knowledge is only valuable in proportion as it has a tendency to promote social and individual happiness, by giving new motives to virtue, and thus extending the influence of the benevolent affections and counteracting or extirpating the malevolent, it follows, that whatever produces a tendency to the malevolent passions, defeats the noblest purposes for which knowledge has ever been acquired.

Wherever the selfish passions predominate, the social and benevolent affections must be proportionally decreased. Pride, as a selfish passion, is particularly inimical to the influence of benevolence. While humility, by depreciating the value of our own superior attainments, and striking off the exaggerations of self-love, permits us to dwell upon the excellencies of others,

and is therefore productive of the benevolent affections.

Whatever tends to inspire children with a high opinion of their own comparative importance ; whatever annexes to the idea of situation, independent of worth or virtue, ideas of contempt or complacency, will certainly counteract our design of inspiring them with humility. The light in which children are generally taught to consider servants must infallibly, at a very early age, produce this high opinion of their own comparative importance ; an importance which they must attach to situation, and which must therefore necessarily be productive of the pride of rank and power—a pride which we would vainly endeavour to reconcile with true Christian humility. Would we make a proper use of the instruments which nature so kindly affords us, in the helplessness of infancy we should find a powerful assistant in laying the foundation of this inestimable virtue. Why should we not teach them to accept of the



services their tender age requires, with meekness and gratitude? Might not this first exercise of the social and benevolent affections produce effects upon the mind so advantageous to the character, as completely to counterbalance all the evils, which can arise from occasional intercourse with domestics? But are these evils certain and unavoidable? Is it impossible to procure attendants for our children, of uncorrupted minds and undepraved manners? I cannot believe it. The corruption and depravity of servants is a general theme. Whence does it proceed but from the corruption and depravity of their superiors? Governed by the selfishness of luxury and pride, we concern ourselves no further with the morals of our domestics, than is necessary to the preservation of our property. No qualities are regarded in them, but such as contribute to the gratification of our ease or convenience. Their virtues are unrewarded by our esteem; their vices

provided they do not immediately injure us, unpunished by our disapprobation.

Whatever degree of justice may be in mere remarks, it must be confessed that in the animal tribe we may find instances of depravity too inveterate to be wrought upon by the united influence of precept and example. Even when the grosser vices do not prevail, we cannot hope that minds destitute of instruction should have escaped the influence of vulgar prejudices, and vulgar errors. Their associations of good and evil, will seldom be found such as we would wish transferred to the minds of our children; and therefore, if we would avoid incurring the painful and laborious task of counteracting and reforming these associations, which, if not counteracted, will inevitable produce low desires, and improper habits, we must be careful to limit the connexion between our children and servants, to those attentions which are indispensable. From the conversation of the weak and vulgar, of whatever rank; child-

ren ought as much as possible to be preserved, and where mothers are blessed with wisdom and kindness, their children will ever prefer the pleasure of their society, to the indulgence of the nursery.

In the families of the great, whose children are left in infancy, exclusively, to the care of servants, the infant mind must necessarily be exposed to the corrupt influence of vice and folly, unless very uncommon pains are taken to procure servants for the nursery, from among those who are as yet uncontaminated by the prevailing manners. But would this simplicity of manners serve as a recommendation? I fear it would prove quite otherwise. The upper nursery-maid in a great family must by all means have a certain smartness in dress and deportment, altogether incompatible with the modest reserve to which I have alluded. She must likewise have a certain talent, known by the name of cleverness, which, as far as I have been able to observe, is generally a

compound of cunning and selfishness. By the exertion of these qualities, she will easily contrive to fill the inferior situations in her department with creatures entirely subservient to her will, and ready not only to adopt all her methods, but to support, by their testimony, every falsehood she thinks fit to utter. With what correct notions of right and wrong, must the children who constantly associate with persons of this description be inspired! To what improving conversation are they doomed to listen! To expect that those who have from the very dawn of observation, seen and heard so much of all that is improper, should retain that purity of mind which is the only foundation of female delicacy, is to expect that they should touch pitch, and not be defiled.

It must either be proved, that early associations have no sort of influence upon the mind, or it must be acknowledged, that children who are permitted to receive all their first impressions from the selfish,

the ignorant, and the impure, will escape wonderfully well, if they are only imbued with vulgar prejudices and vulgar errors. How is the evil to be remedied? How can ladies of rank be expected to give up their time and attention exclusively to their nurseries?—If their time and attention be really better engaged, or if they are conscious that they neither possess abilities nor inclinations duly to perform the most important of the maternal duties, why do they not, in such circumstances, endeavour to provide a substitute, who would supply to their children the want of a mother's ever watchful eye? The infant offspring of people of quality would thus enjoy, in some degree, the same advantages which have hitherto been only enjoyed by the children of persons placed in a less elevated situation. They would imbibe their first ideas from a mind regulated by principle, and enlightened by some degree of cultivation; and thus have some chance of rising superior to the low passions and

low pursuits to which the vulgar of all ranks are habitually addicted. Under the direction of such a person as I have described, the behaviour of the servants, in their intercourse with the children, would be regulated by rules of strict propriety. Nor would it then be necessary to counteract the bad effects apprehended to result from this intercourse, by prejudicing the minds of the children against them.

Never, in any instance, does this prejudice answer the end proposed. Soon, indeed, may children learn to regard servants in the light of inferior beings, whom, *for that reason*, they ought to despise. Soon may they acquire the habit of commanding them in the tone of authority, of speaking to them with arrogance, and of observing and reporting their conversation and conduct, with all the eloquence of invective. Does it thence follow, that they will be the less liable to imbibe the prejudices, or to imitate the manners, of these degraded and despised companions?

Experience, I think, shows the contrary. Better, far better, to adopt the plan of complete and absolute separation, than to permit children to associate with beings they are taught at once to tyrannize over and to condemn.

In every sphere of life, the treatment of servants is of more importance to our children's minds, than is generally imagined, and therefore merits our serious attention.

Cunning is one of the vices of the servile state, which we should beware of encouraging. From the moment a servant perceives us open to flattery, this vice is in a perpetual state of requisition. By these means the favourite nursery-maid frequently governs a whole family. It is not by a scrupulous examination of the strictness with which she performs her duty, that we learn to appreciate her worth; it is by her hyperbolical expressions of affection for the *dear infants*, by her flattering encomiums on their extraordinary beauty and

wonderful sagacity, and by her still more flattering comparisons between them and the less extraordinary children of our neighbours, that we are convinced of her value. What admirable initiatory lessons of vanity and self-conceit for the poor children who are present at these conversations between mother and maid! Would we avoid all this, we should never permit servants to address us, nor ever speak to them, but on their immediate business. We should enforce a strict obedience to our commands, which should be issued with mildness, but with authority. We should admit of no disobedience to our rules, on pretence of tenderness to the children; and by showing we look on it as mere pretence, we shall soon put a stop to these breaches of discipline. Nor should we ever withhold the just reward of approbation for a strict compliance with our injunctions. By these means children will learn the value of obedience; it will become more strongly associated with the pleasing ideas of applause



and approbation; and by seeing that we *esteem worth in every situation*, they will learn to consider it as having an intrinsic value.

When we permit ourselves to converse familiarly with servants on affairs remote from their business, and allow of their giving their opinion on our method of management, we teach children to apply to them as oracles of information on every subject. We inspire a taste for listening to their tattle, and must submit to the consequences. By showing them, on the contrary, that we consider servants as useful assistants in the business of our family, but not in the light of companions or advisers; that their merit consists not in an assiduous compliance with our humours and caprices, but in a strict and uniform discharge of the duties of their station, we prevent much of their influence on the minds of children. By example, as well as precept, we should teach children to accept of their services, where they are

called for, with thankfulness; never to speak to them in the haughty tone of arrogant authority; never wantonly to exercise their patience, by keeping them waiting for our pleasure; and never to make their personal defects, or even that ignorance, which is less their fault than their misfortune, the subject of ridicule. By our care of their health, and attention to them in sickness, in which the children should, if the disease be not infectious, learn to assist us, they will be taught the duties of humanity; by the care they see us bestow on their religious instruction, they will receive lessons of its importance; and by our utter reprobation of every instance of falsehood or equivocation, which should be followed by immediate dismissal from our service, they will attach to a departure from truth ideas of irremediable disgrace.

By a steady adherence to these rules, we shall obviate the ill consequences of that intercourse with domestics, which it is im-

possible to prevent; and by the treatment we give our servants, convey to our children wholesome lessons of humanity and moral rectitude.\*

\* Wherever the injudicious practice of engaging servants from one stated term to another, still prevails, it is in vain to look for any improvement in the moral conduct of that class of persons. In the prospect of having it in their power to change their place, at the period of universal move, they enter into service in the true spirit of gambling; and, certain of not being turned away between terms, unless for the commission of some *legal* crime, they are not, as elsewhere, prompted by self-interest to observe a decent propriety of conduct. Ever looking forward to better their condition, they become restless, discontented, and careless. Totally destitute of that generous attachment which exercises and improves the best feelings of the heart, it is not to be wondered that they at length sink into hopeless depravity.

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## LETTER V.

### ASSOCIATIONS PRODUCING THE MALEVOLENT PASSIONS.

*State of Infancy favourable to the Cultivation of the benevolent Affections.—Tendency of every Passion to produce Passions of the Class to which it belongs.—Malevolent and dissocial Passions inspired by the Gratification of Self-will.—Examples.*

BENEVOLENCE, in a general sense, includes all the sympathetic affections by which we are made to rejoice in the happiness, and grieve at the misery, of others. It disposes the mind to sociality, generosity, and gratitude; and is the fountain of compassion and mercy. All the qualities belonging to benevolence have a tendency to produce peace and complacency in the breast; so that the happiness of the indi-

vidual, as well as of society, is intimately concerned in their cultivation. The passions which it inspires are all of the amiable class, as love, hope, joy, &c. ; and these passions, in their turn, increase the dispositions to benevolence, for the growth and nourishment of which, in the state of infancy, the goodness of Providence has made ample provision.

The helplessness of the infant state is protracted in man to a period far beyond that of other animals ; and this helplessness, by inspiring compassion and tenderness in the breast of adults, has a powerful tendency to keep alive the spirit of benevolence in the human heart. Wherever human policy has counteracted the wise designs of nature, by taking children from their parents at an early age, and separating them into a distinct society, for the purpose of education, the sympathetic affections have become extinct ; a striking instance of which occurs in the history of ancient Sparta, where the murder of infants was, in certain circumstances, not

only enjoined by the laws, but permitted by the parents without the least remorse.

Luxury, which is ever at war with nature, has, perhaps, in no instance done a greater injury to the interests of benevolence, than by introducing as a fashion, that premature separation of children from their parents, which the Spartan legislator enjoined as a duty. If the exercise of parental tenderness softens the heart, so as to render it eminently susceptible of all the sympathetic and social affections, it is the interest of society, that the objects of it should not be suddenly removed from the parental roof.

According to the wise provision of nature, the fond endearments of parental love not only increase the benevolent feelings in the breast of the parent, but produce a disposition to them in the breast of the child, which is soon made sensible of the source whence its happiness is derived. A judicious parent will take advantage of this circumstance, to

encourage the growth of benevolence in the infant mind.

The pleasures they receive from others, naturally incline children to sociality and good-will; and were they, while they receive them, always made sensible of their own helplessness, they would, at the same time, be inspired with the feelings of generosity and gratitude. But the tenderness of parents so seldom is judicious, that the wise provision of nature for inspiring children with benevolence is commonly rendered abortive; and, instead of the amiable dispositions arising from love and gratitude, the seeds of moroseness, anger, revenge, jealousy, cruelty, and malice, are often prematurely planted in the little heart. Nature early impels the mind to seek for happiness; but in the dawn of reason and experience, the judgments concerning it are often erroneous. In infancy, all ideas of happiness are connected with the gratification of self-will; and by the frequent

indulgence of this gratification, the association is confirmed. The idea of misery is, consequently, associated with the idea of disappointment, and it becomes the business of the parent to break this association, by convincing the child, from its own experience, that every disappointment of the will is not productive of misery, nor every gratification of it productive of happiness. We have already remarked, that the painful sensations make a more vivid, and more lasting impression than the pleasurable; from which it evidently follows, that the happiness derived from the gratification of *will* can never bear any proportion to the misery occasioned by its disappointment.

An admirable illustration of this doctrine is given by Hartley, who, after observing that the gratification of self-will, if it does not always produce pleasure, yet is always so associated with the idea of pleasure in the mind, that the disappointment of it never fails to produce pain, proceeds as



follows: " If the *will* was always gratified, this mere associated pleasure would, according to the present frame of our natures, absorb, as it were, all other pleasures; and thus, by drying up the source whence it sprung, be itself dried up at last; and the first disappointments would be intolerable. Both of which things are observable, in an inferior degree, both in adults and in children after they are much indulged. *Gratifications of the will without the consequent expected pleasure, disappointments of it without the consequent expected pain, are here particularly useful to us.* And it is by this, amongst other means, that the human will is brought to a conformity with the Divine, which is the only radical cure for all our evils and disappointments, and the only earnest and medium for obtaining everlasting happiness."

By the above reasoning, which is I think conclusive, it evidently appears, that, were the constant gratification of will possible, (which, in the present state of things, it

certainly is not) it would only tend to make the being so gratified miserable. The constant gratification of self-will must necessarily exclude the exercise of all the grateful passions. Where success is certain, hope can have no existence; nor can joy be produced by attaining that which is considered as a right. Let hope and joy be excluded from the human mind, and where is happiness?

Further, the habitual gratification of will not only precludes the grateful passions of hope and joy, but tends to produce all the unamiable and hateful passions and dispositions of the human heart. Anger, peevishness, and pride, are almost, without exception, produced by the constant gratification of every wayward desire. The first is the father of revenge and cruelty; the second, of displacency and discontent; and the third, of arrogance, ingratitude, and contempt. Think of this, ye mothers, who by a weak and blind indulgence of the infant

will, lay the foundation of future vice and misery to your ill-fated offspring !

Were the happiness of the *child* and the happiness of the *man* incompatible, so that whatever contributed to the latter must be deducted from the former, the overweaning indulgence of parents might be excused, and the common apology, viz. "that as life is uncertain, the poor things ought to be permitted to enjoy the present," accepted as satisfactory. But may we not appeal to every person, who has had the misfortune to live for any time with a family of spoiled children, for a sanction to our assertion, that the gratification of will has only been productive of misery ?

In the career of indulgence, the fondest parents must somewhere stop. There are certain boundaries, which folly itself will not at all times be willing to overleap. The pain of the disappointment that must then ensue, will be intolerably aggravated by all the discordant passions fostered by preceding indulgence.

A child, whose infant will has been habituated to the discipline of obedience, submits to disappointment, as to inevitable necessity, with cheerfulness. Nor will disappointment to such a one so frequently occur, a wholesome check having been early put upon the extravagance of desire. Whilst, on the contrary, the satiety consequent upon the fruition of every wish, sets the imagination to work to find out new and untried sources of pleasure. I once saw a child make himself miserable for a whole evening, because he could not have the birds that flew through the garden, to play with. In vain did the fond mother promise, that a bird should be procured to-morrow, and that it should be all his own, and that he should have a pretty gilded cage to keep it in, which was far better than the nasty high trees on which it now perched. "No, no, that would not do; it must be caught now; he would have it now, and at no other time!"

“ Well, my pretty darling, don't cry,” returns Mamma, “ and you shall have a bird, a pretty bird, love, in a minute ;” casting a significant look on her friends as she retired to speak to the servants. She soon returned with a young chicken in her hand, which she covered so as not to be immediately seen.

“ Here, darling, is a pretty, pretty bird for you ; but you must not cry so. Bless me, if you cry at that rate, the old black dog will come and fetch you in a minute. There now, that's my good boy ! now dry your eyes, love, and look at the pretty bird.”

At these words little master snatches it from her hand, and perceiving the deception, dashes it on the ground with tenfold fury. All now was uproar and dismay, till the scene becoming rather too oppressive, even for the mother, a servant was called, who took the little struggling victim of passion in his arms, and conveyed him to the nursery. Such are the effects of the

unlimited indulgence of self-will ! Yet this fond mother persuaded herself, that she obeyed the dictates of pure affection ! Had she, however, been accustomed to reflect upon the motives that influenced her conduct, she would have found selfishness in this instance the governing principle.

Parental affection has been described by many philosophers as a refined species of self-love. Considered merely as an *instinct*, it undoubtedly is so. But though the same instinctive fondness is discernible in the brute creation, not only leading the parent to provide for the nourishment and protection, but to give the necessary education to its infant offspring, it is in the human species only that it injures the objects of tenderness by a blind indulgence.

Were parental affection in man, as it is in other animals, merely instinctive, its operations would be equally steady and unerring : But to man the higher gift of reason is granted, and, guided by its light, the tenderness of the parent will be directed

to aim at securing the real and permanent happiness of the beloved object.

It is not uncommon for parents, while they forego the exercise of their own reason, to trust to the future reason of their children, for counteracting the effects of their injudicious management. But does experience justify their confidence? I believe every person, who has traced the rise and progress of the passions in individuals, will answer in the negative.

The frequent recurrence of any passion, even in our earliest years, begets a tendency to that passion, till it is strengthened into a habit, and becomes as it were interwoven with the constitution. How difficult, how next to impossible, it is then to conquer, all can witness! Reason may govern, and religion may so far subdue it, so as to prevent its excess to the prejudice of society; but by nothing less than a miracle can it be totally eradicated from the breast. The more worthy the heart, the more delicate the conscience, the more bitter will

be the sensations of regret and self-abhorrence, which a person liable to the dominion of passion, and at the same time under the influence of principle, must frequently endure. How many are the agonizing tears shed in private by the irascible, while, perhaps, the sudden ebullition of wrath that brought them forth, may have fixed a dagger in the heart of a friend, doomed there to rankle for ever! And yet anger, being a passion which quickly vents itself and is then annihilated, is less generally obnoxious than peevishness or pride, which have no crisis, but which continue to operate without rest or interval.

And here it is worthy of remark, how the passions act and re-act upon each other. The frequent gratification of will engenders pride, and pride augments the desire for the gratification of will, till it becomes insatiable. Hence the love of power predominates, and hence a disposition to tyranny appears to be inherent in the mind of man. Many, alas! are the tyrannical



husbands and fathers, that have been formed in the nursery!

The unamiable passions, like the lean kine in Pharaoh's dream, which devoured the goodly, have a strong tendency to destroy the amiable. Indeed, they are, in a great measure, incompatible with each other. The social affections are kept alive by a sense of mutual dependence and mutual obligation. But pride acknowledges no dependence; and arrogates to itself all the attentions and good offices of others, not as a matter of favour, but of right. Hence, while it is ever ready to take offence at the slightest neglect, it is never warmed by kindness into gratitude.

Observe the boy who has been a mother's darling, and to whom his sisters have from infancy been obliged to do homage. How often are their endeavours to please him received with contempt, while the most trifling offence is aggravated into an injury. Follow him into the world. There, alas! mortification and disappointment at-

tend his steps, for there no one regards him in the light in which he has been taught to regard himself. No one comes up to his ideas of propriety in their conduct towards him. If favoured by fortune, he may, indeed, meet with many flatterers, but he will never make a friend. The irritation to which he is perpetually exposed, will by degrees expel the feelings of benevolence from his heart; and, perhaps, even the parent, to whose fond indulgence he owes his misery, may be the first to feel the effects of his malevolence and ingratitude.\*

As the operations of reason are slow, and her induction liable to error, it has pleased the Almighty Creator to make not only

\* The just and striking point of view, in which Dr. Moore has placed this subject in the life of Zeluco, must speak more forcibly to the heart than volumes of reasoning. It is a picture which every mother ought to study. But, alas! where is the mother, whose fond partiality will allow her to see one feature of Zeluco in her own spoiled darling?

reason, but the passions themselves, our schoolmasters in virtue. Every passion, the inordinate gratification of which is inimical to the happiness of others, is likewise inimical to our own felicity; while the grateful and benevolent passions and affections of our nature, bring, in the exercise, pleasure, and on reflection, peace. Is it not, then, a sufficient argument against producing, by early indulgence, a predominant desire for the gratification of self-will, to show that the instruments employed by this desire to procure its gratification, are all of the unworthy class? Can we too soon begin to enforce the practice of that self-denial which renders the control of self-will easy and habitual? Or can we be at a loss for opportunities of initiating children in the salutary practice of forbearance? It will always, however, be practised to most advantage, when it is a necessary sacrifice to the ease or comfort of others.

Children, for instance, delight in noise. Nature has, doubtless for some wise end, rendered them susceptible of this pleasure; but it frequently happens, that they cannot indulge in it, without producing some degree of pain or uneasiness to those around them. Whenever this is the case, children should learn to pay attention to the feelings of the person they disturb, and be made instantly to control the desire of noise-making, as a proper exercise of benevolence.

I would no more prevent children from making noise, when their noisy mirth gave no disturbance, than I would prevent them from eating the good things presented to them, when there was no reason to the contrary. But I would have them, in both instances, capable of exercising self-control, and would no more permit a child to think it had a right to stun the ears of a visitor, than to think it had a right to snatch the victuals from his plate. Again, children who are conscious of being the prime ob-

jects of solicitude to a fond mother, soon betray the selfish wish of engrossing her whole attention. I admit that a mother's attention cannot be better employed than in studying the happiness of her children, but if she considers their real and permanent happiness, she will not permit them to acquire a consummate opinion of their own importance. If she permit them to interrupt conversation at their pleasure, and, however seriously she may be engaged, allow them to intrude with every silly question they think fit to ask, can they avoid becoming sensible of their own consequence? and will not this consciousness increase the pride, and strengthen the self-will, which it is our duty to subdue?

The practice of self-denial, in such instances, costs nothing where the practice is habitual; but when it is never practised, except on great occasions, as in the company of particular strangers, we may easily perceive how much the restraint imposed upon the wonted prattler, disconcerts the

spirits and affects the temper. The silence which is for a while obstinately persisted in, is in this case by no means to be attributed to bashfulness. Its origin is betrayed by the sulky frown, which never for a moment relaxes, until the self-will has been gratified, by attracting the attention of its parent, either by whispering some trifling request, or by doing something which extorts a reprimand; for, to a spoiled child, rebuke is far less intolerable than neglect. Who does not perceive, with pity, the malevolent passions that are thus gathering force in the little soul!

Let us now turn our eyes to a more pleasing portrait. Happily, it is one of which I may find the original at no great distance, and in more than one family of my acquaintance. Children, who, while treated with the utmost fondness, have been taught to feel that, as children, they owed respect to their superiors in age; and that in order to be loved, they must attend to the feelings of others. The notice of a visitor, in-

stead of being spurned, is received by such children as a kindness. Frank, open, affectionate, they rejoice in being objects of affection, but the fear of forfeiting the claim to it renders them anxious to please, and careful not to offend. The benevolent affections thus produced, give such a happy tendency to the practice of benevolence, as must essentially influence the character: the more frequently the mind has rejoiced in the consciousness of having contributed to the happiness of others, the more will it be disposed to a repetition of acts of beneficence, kindness, and mercy. The consciousness of having contributed to the unhappiness of others, produces, on the contrary, an irritated and uncomfortable state of mind. Frequent irritations of this sort are the certain fruits of great indulgence. The malevolent passions produced by them, appear, at first, but as a small cloud, that occasionally overcasts the mental horizon, and which, it is hoped, the sun of reason will dispel. But, alas! it soon grows too

thick for the sun of reason to penetrate. During the sprightliness of youth, it may often brighten into transient gleams of generosity and affection; but if not repelled by the strength of religious principle, it returns in tenfold darkness, till at length, having extinguished all the amiable and all the endearing qualities of the heart, it spreads its gloomy wings over the soul, and rages in all the horror of a perpetual tempest.\*

Of what importance, then, is the early management of children; since upon it, in a great measure, depend the vice and virtue, the happiness and misery of the world! Before the period when what is vulgarly considered the proper business of education has commenced, such a propensity to the

\* Upon the principle which I have here unfolded, it is observed by Lord Kames, that "A passion founded on a peculiar propensity subsists generally for ever, which is the case of pride, envy, and malice; objects are never wanting to inflame the propensity into a passion."—*Elements of Criticism*, vol. i. p. 122.



malignant passions is frequently generated in the infant mind, as not all the pains of the most careful and judicious preceptors can ever after eradicate. And here I may safely appeal to all who are concerned in the education of youth: let them say, how often they have been able to conquer the spirit of self-will, with its attendant passions, pride, arrogance, anger, resentment, peevishness, and ingratitude? If these are not stifled in the birth, they may afterwards be cut in pieces by the rod of chastisement; but, like the Polypus, they will preserve the vital principle, and be immediately reproduced.

How much of the tendency to passion may be referred to physical causes, it is not for me to examine; it is sufficient for my purpose to show, that they are often produced by an early and indiscreet indulgence of self-will. That this indulgence generates pride, we know from experience. That the disappointment of its gratification, after the habit of indulgence, produces

the violent and ungrateful passions, is likewise evident. And that the frequent recurrence of any passion produces a disposition to that and similar passions, has been, I hope, clearly and satisfactorily proved.

To prevent any mistake that may arise from my strenuous inculcation of the necessity of the early control of self-will, I think it necessary to observe, that if injudicious indulgence becomes injurious to the mind, in consequence of the frequent irritation it occasions, (which is obvious from the fretfulness observable in all spoiled children), it follows, that injudicious severity, by producing a similar irritation, must be equally injurious to the disposition. But do we not often see the one follow the other? A poor child, accustomed to have every thing he cries for, will sometimes cry for things Mamma may not choose to give, and persevere in crying, till he exhausts her patience, and then he is to be whipped! People first indulge children for

their own pleasure, and then chastise the poor infants for the natural consequence of that indulgence; and it is, perhaps, difficult to say, which injures the temper most. "You must not touch this! Don't do that!" are injunctions for ever in the mouth of a foolish mother; who, nevertheless, permits *this* to be touched, and *that* to be done, with impunity, till some petty mischief is accomplished, which she considers of consequence, though it is impossible for the child to make the distinction, and then he must be of course corrected!

Self-will grows so rapidly upon indulgence, that a capricious humour is its unavoidable consequence. This caprice, when it becomes troublesome and unmanageable, is likewise punished; and to this punishment does the mother appeal as a sufficient testimony, that she does not spoil her child! If it be possible, and that it is possible I have had ample proofs, by an early habit of implicit obedience, to prevent all this correction, would not the mother,

as well as the child, be the happier for it? Even in the nurse's arms, a notion of the necessity of this obedience may be obtained.

The prohibitions of a parent ought to be judicious, but they ought to be decisive. When they are made so from earliest infancy, they will not often be controverted. A salutary check will thus be put upon the gratification of will, and the wish for that gratification will thus become habitually subordinate to the will of the parent. This requires only steadiness and self-command; but steadiness and self-command are seldom the virtues of young mothers and nurses; and yet, without these, there are no hopes, that the education of a child will ever be conducted upon consistent principles.

The idea of obedience ought to be early and firmly associated with ideas of security and happiness. And here again the imbecility and helplessness of infancy afford us the means of effecting our salutary purpose.

Entirely dependent on the wisdom and experience of others, to guard them from the dangers to which they are hourly exposed, children might be easily made to learn the advantage of obedience; and they infallibly would learn it, if obedience were properly enforced. Were all prohibitions *made absolute*, and the necessity of issuing them guarded against as much as possible, so that they should not often occur, it would go far toward rendering obedience natural and easy; for it would then appear a matter of necessity, and as such be submitted to without reluctance.

I was some years ago intimately acquainted with a respectable and happy family, where the behaviour of the children excited my admiration. One morning, on entering the drawing-room, I found the little group of laughing cherubs at high play round their fond mother, who was encouraging their sportive vivacity, which was at that time noisy enough, but which on my entrance she hushed into silence by

a single word. No bad humour followed. But as the spirits, which had been elevated by the preceding amusement, could not at once sink into a state of quiescence, the judicious mother did not require what she knew could not, without difficulty, be complied with; but, calmly addressing them, gave the choice of remaining in the room without making any noise, or of going to their own apartment, where they might make what noise they pleased. The eldest and youngest of the four preferred the former, while the two others went away to the nursery. Those who stayed with us amused themselves by cutting paper in a corner, without giving any interruption to our conversation. I could not refrain from expressing my admiration at their behaviour, and begged to know by what art she had attained such a perfect government of her children's wills and actions. "By no art," returned this excellent parent, "but that of teaching them from the very cradle an *implicit submission*. Having never once

been permitted to disobey me, they have no idea of attempting it; but you see, I always give them a choice, when it can be done with propriety; if it cannot, whatever I say they know to be a law, like that of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not."

The happy effects of this discipline were soon rendered more conspicuous, during the very long illness of this amiable mother; who, when confined to her chamber, continued to regulate her family through the medium of her eldest daughter, then a child of eleven years old.

Affectionate as obedient, this amiable girl not only attended her mother's sick-bed with the most tender assiduity, but acting as her mother's substitute towards her little brothers and sisters, directed their conduct and behaviour; and was obeyed with the same unmurmuring submission, as if their mother had herself been present. Was her mother so ill as to render noise particularly injurious—all was, by her care,

hushed to silence. She invented plays for the little ones that would make no disturbance, and taught them to speak in whispers. It was sufficient reward for their forbearance, to be told by her that Mamma sent them a kiss and thanked them for their goodness, *and that she had been the better for it.* What a foundation was here laid for the operation of benevolence!

Let us compare this with the behaviour of a child, to whom the gratification of self-will had become habitual, who had never been taught to submit to aught but force, and to whom submission was consequently hateful, exciting all the painful emotions of anger, indignation, and resentment. I have known such a child make use of a parent's illness as a mean of procuring the gratification of all its capricious humours; when seeing the pains that were taken to prevent noise, it would, on the least opposition, cry out, "If you don't give it me this minute, I'll roar!" and ac-



cordingly she would roar till she had what she wanted.

What are the dispositions, which, in the latter case, must have naturally been inspired? To the pleasing associations attached to the gratification of self-will, the idea of inflicting pain upon others must likewise be attached. What a foundation for that cruelty, which is always allied to a tyrannical disposition!

Let us suppose the same indulgence continued through the early stages of youth, in the fond hope that reason will conquer passion, as the child advances to maturity.

Were the nature of passion, with regard to the influence it has upon the judgment, properly attended to, I believe this fond hope would be soon annihilated. On a mind under the dominion of passion, the calm suggestions of reason can have little influence, supposing the calm suggestions of reason possible in such circumstances. But it is not possible; for to a mind under the dominion of the

selfish passions, that appears to be just and reasonable, which is in reality unjust and unreasonable in the last degree; because the ideas of *just* and *reasonable* are all by pride associated with the idea of the gratification of self-will.\* Does it not hence appear evident, that the farther such a person as I have been describing advances in life, the more firmly will the dominion of passion be established in the heart? Reason will, indeed, be soon taught by experience to discern the necessity of governing, or at least of disguising, these feelings in the company of strangers or superiors. But if this restraint be not of sufficient duration to induce a habit of self-government, and if that habit be not strengthened and confirmed by motives of

\* The *reasonings* of the traffickers in human misery, the self-interested abettors of the slave-trade, may with propriety be referred to as an illustration of my present argument. The imagination, inflamed by the passion of avarice, aggravated by pride and ambition, sees it *just* and *reasonable*, that one part of the species should inflict upon another every kind and degree of misery, that human nature can sustain, in order to gratify the avarice, pride, and luxury, of a few individuals!

religion, occasional restraint will only serve to increase the impetuosity of passion.

The salutary effect of long continued restraint upon the irascible passions, is a strong argument in favour of the cultivation of that politeness, which, though too often a fictitious substitute of true gentleness, is yet favourable to the cultivation of the reality. Were the same laws of politeness, which govern our intercourse with strangers, always observed in the more familiar intercourse of domestic life, it would prove a sovereign antidote against the frequent recurrence of those jars and wrangles, by which the happiness of so many families is destroyed. True politeness consists not merely in a strict adherence to the forms of ceremony ; *it consists in an exquisite observance of the feelings of others, and an invariable respect for those feelings.* By this definition it claims alliance with benevolence, and may sometimes be found as genuine in the cottage as in the court. But whether politeness be of the genuine or spurious

sort, it requires the exercise of self-control. If it is only occasionally assumed, the casual restraint it puts upon the feelings, will not indeed produce much benefit to the disposition; but from a constant and habitual attention to those minor duties which are prescribed by the rules of politeness, the spirit of selfishness cannot fail to be in some degrees ameliorated. As far as a readiness to yield to the ease and comfort of others, is connected with good breeding, good breeding is connected with the benevolent principle, and ranks as a moral virtue. This species of politeness ought therefore to be from infancy inculcated. Where there are several children, it becomes essential to the preservation of domestic harmony; and by the salutary restraint which it imposes on self-will, it promotes the happiness of the individual, by representing that eagerness for trifles, which is so often productive of anger, strife, peevishness, and resentment. In the familiar intercourse of domestic life

a thousand opportunities daily occur for exciting these passions, by the petty oppositions which self-will has to encounter; and where all the members of a family are equally eager for its gratification, the scenes of discord that ensue are horrible. But supposing that only one, one darling child, in whom these passions have been fostered by indulgence, should be subject to their influence, I fear it will be quite sufficient to destroy the charm of domestic harmony. When this has been so repeatedly wounded, as to call aloud for a remedy, the only one that presents itself is that of sending the child to school. There, it is hoped, the passions will be subdued, and the mind opened by education to the control of reason. How far this hope is likely to be justified by the event, is worthy of our consideration. But this must be reserved for another Letter; the present has already too far exceeded its bounds.

## LETTER VI.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*Inefficacy of the usual Methods employed to counteract the Effects of injudicious Indulgence.—Vanity ; its Consequences.—Indolence of Parents renders them frequently blind to the Faults of their Children.—Happy Consequences of early Obedience.*

IT is not at present my business, to enter on the peculiar advantages or disadvantages of public education ; all that now concerns me is, to examine how far it can operate in meliorating the temper and dispositions of the heart.

I presume, it is with a view towards counteracting the effects of home indulgence, that the system of *fagging*, which prevails in some of our most celebrated seminaries, was at first introduced ; but how

far it contributes to this desirable end may reasonably be doubted.

The spirit of self-will is not to be subdued by a temporary subjection to a whimsical and capricious tyranny. It does not thence learn to impose restraint upon itself, but while it sullenly submits to superior strength, gathers force from the fond anticipation of the moment, when its turn of despotism shall commence. It appears, then, that this temporary subjection serves but to whet the appetite for tyranny, and to add malignity to revenge. Slaves are ever observed to be the most cruel task-masters; and I make no doubt we should find on examination, that the little *fag* who has most severely suffered from the cruelty of the great boy, to whom he has been forced to yield an unwilling submission, becomes, in his turn, the most cruel despot.

Let us suppose the self-willed boy sent to a school where fagging is prohibited, and where a proper degree of discipline is

maintained. That this discipline has a salutary tendency, we cannot doubt, when we consider, that it is "*by gratifications of the will without the consequent expected pleasure, and disappointments of it without the consequent expected pain,*" that self-will is most powerfully counteracted.

Were these happy effects of discipline allowed fully to operate, they might no doubt prove effectual; but many circumstances concur to lessen their operation.

The discipline of the school-room is instituted to serve one particular purpose, and provided that be obtained, it is deemed sufficient. If the demands made upon the attention and the memory be complied with, there is no question asked concerning the tempers and dispositions of the heart. These are left to the discipline of companions; and where those companions have previously contracted all the bad habits, and tempers, produced by indulgence, the passions which ought to be subdued will



be kept in a state of perpetual irritation, by the recurrence of subjects of contention.

Let us now turn to the other side of the picture, and suppose that all have at home been properly treated in infancy; the will subdued by early habits of obedience, and all the first associations of the mind to have been strictly attended to, so as to have produced the first principles of piety and benevolence, a tendency to all the amiable passions and affections of the heart; generosity and gratitude glowing in the breasts of the ardent; sympathy and tenderness in the souls of the gentle; while candour, simplicity, and truth, were alike the portion of all. Let us suppose a school composed of such children, and governed by a man of sense and discretion, who knew how to render the introduction to knowledge subservient to the cause of virtue—Improvement might then, indeed, be expected with confidence; for not only from the instructions of the master, but from the social intercourse of the scholars,

improvement would inevitably result. The friendships formed in such a society would spring from congeniality of taste and sympathetic affection; from gratitude for kind offices, or esteem for extraordinary qualities; which principles of friendship are all excluded by the selfish and unsocial passions, that prevail among boys who have been spoiled by previous indiscreet indulgence. It cannot be too often repeated, that where by this indulgence every idea of pleasure is connected with the gratification of self-will, the benevolent and social affections must be annihilated. Every competitor is viewed as an enemy by pride and selfishness; and the reward bestowed on merit, which calls forth the pleasing emotions of sympathy in the breasts of the generous, excites in the self-willed the painful feelings of envy and displacency. I have seen a young person of extraordinary endowments, but whose disposition had been ruined in infancy, turn pale at the praises of a school-fellow, and show such

symptoms of hatred and antipathy to the object of applause, as plainly evinced the strength of the malevolent passions in the heart. When these passions have obtained such an ascendancy, it is in vain to hope, that by the discipline of a school they can be eradicated. All that the best school can do for them is, to restrain them by means of terror; and this restraint may so far operate, as to teach the pupil to conceal emotions that would lead to disgrace or punishment, but will not prevent their influence, where neither disgrace nor punishment is apprehended.

If school discipline can do little toward meliorating the temper and disposition with regard to boys, I am afraid that with girls it can do still less. In the course of a classical education, there is a method, a regularity, that insensibly produces correspondent habits in the mind; and though the cultivation of the understanding may not be always as much attended to as it might and ought, yet from the very nature of

their studies, associations must be formed favourable to its improvement; and the improvement of the reasoning faculties is surely one step toward the attainment of power over the passions. But in the education of girls, alas! its influence is seldom tried. With the objects to which their attention is directed, the reasoning faculties have no concern. In the routine of accomplishments to which they are destined, no one power of the mind is called into exercise, except memory. And so distinct from each other, so multiform, so perpetually changing, are the objects of their attention, that it is impossible the mind should ever be long enough fixed, to acquire habits of regularity or arrangement.

Where the pride attached to self-will prevails, emulation must degenerate into envy, and envy cannot be better classed than it is in our Litany, with *hatred, malice,* and *uncharitableness*; so that where it is made a powerful instrument in education,

there can be little hopes of bettering the dispositions of the heart.

Vanity, not appearing on a superficial view to be a dissocial passion, is less the object of our hatred than of our contempt. But when we consider its effect upon the mind, we must deprecate the introduction of it, as the kindling of a destructive flame, which time cannot extinguish, and which reason cannot quench; which blinds the understanding, and warps the judgment, rendering flattery not only pleasant but necessary as the food it feeds on, and giving a disrelish for truth. Gratified vanity, it is true, is always complacent, and on this account wears the aspect of benevolence. But does it sympathize in the sorrows of the afflicted? Does it glow with the honest warmth of gratitude? Is it capable of making a generous sacrifice for another's good? No: Vanity, so far from partaking of these characteristics of benevolence, is ever *cold* and *selfish*, alike incapable of tender sympathy and generous affection. And yet

vanity is deemed a harmless instrument in education; and in that of girls especially is resorted to, as the only mean of inducing application to the troublesome trifles which form the sum total of their studies and pursuits!

In endeavouring to show from the nature of school education, the very small chance there is of its being the means of rectifying the wayward humours, and exterminating the ungrateful passions, begotten and cherished by early indulgence, I do not mean to cast any reflection on the conductors of these seminaries. I am rather inclined to admire the patience, that is unprovoked by the provocations of the insolent; the assiduity, that is unwearied by the waywardness of the idle; and the energy, that is unsubdued by the contradictions of the splenetic, the peevish, and the disobedient. With all this variety of humours have teachers to contend; and to contend with a manifest disadvantage, arising from that early pride, consequent upon the indul-

gence of self-will, which is first permitted to be exercised on domestics, and is then extended to teachers, who are likewise looked upon in the light of hirelings, and consequently subjected to the contempt even of infant arrogance.

And here permit me a short digression, to call your attention to the increasing influence of pride, which has kept full pace with increase of luxury, and which appears in no instance more glaring than in that I have just now alluded to. Compare the airs of insolence and contempt, with which we now see girls behave towards the most respectable teachers, with that awe and veneration with which they used formerly to be inspired towards them. Methinks I now behold the venerable matron, who first initiated me into the mysteries of plain work and embroidery, surrounded by the little attentive group that trembled at her frown. She did not often frown; for a look, a word, was sufficient to ensure obedience. I do not recollect, that her will

was ever disputed in a single instance. We read to her by turns, as she thought it most convenient for us; and the instant her desire was known, it was complied with, without an attempt at reasoning or wrangling upon the propriety of her choice of reader or of books. Her pupils were of very different ranks in society, but perfectly upon an equality in her presence. Nor did it at all detract from veneration, even in the mind of the richest among us, that the salary she received for our instruction was no more than five shillings a quarter! Does not this manifest, in glaring colours, the influence of early association? Children, accustomed from infancy to associate ideas of respect and reverence with age and wisdom, independent of situation, and taught to consider instruction as a benefit, could not but regard their instructors in the light of benefactors, to whom they owed veneration and gratitude.

If the unamiable tempers and discordant passions, born of early indulgence, be so



powerful as to resist the influence of discipline, what is to be expected from a home education under the eye of the parents, to whose indiscreet indulgence the rise of these tempers and passions is to be attributed?

When infantine prattle has lost its charm, when the child can no longer be considered as a plaything to be toyed with for amusement, and when the little wayward humours, that were so pretty in the baby, begin to be felt troublesome in the child, it often happens, that the indulgence of parents is suddenly changed into severity. The perpetual and unexpected crossings of its will, which the child is then doomed to experience, cannot fail to call forth all the resentment of its soul; expressed according to previous dispositions and constitutional tendency, either by anger, sullenness, or obstinate perverseness; and these tempers are perhaps again increased by the improper methods taken to effect their cure. The disposition to benevolence is

thus destroyed; and too often does it happen, that the disposition to malevolence is introduced in its room: for the frequent recurrence of anger, or peevishness, or resentment, begets a tendency to hatred and ill-will, which may continue to rankle in the heart for ever.

That pride which fixes an adventitious value on whatever belongs to self, is apt to exaggerate all the good qualities of children into perfections, while it throws a thick veil over the bad. This selfish blindness is admirably exposed by Mrs. More, who well observes, that " Ill-judging tenderness is only a concealed *self-love*, which cannot bear to be witness to the uneasiness which a present disappointment, or difficulty, or vexation, would cause to a darling child; but which yet does not scruple, by improper gratification, to store up for it future miseries, which the child will infallibly suffer, though it will be at a distant period, which the selfish mother will be saved the pain of beholding. Another prin-

ciple, something different from this, although it may properly fall under the head of selfishness, seems to actuate some parents in their conduct toward their children: I mean, a certain slothfulness of mind, a love of ease, which imposes a voluntary blindness, and makes them not choose to see what will give them trouble to combat."

The indolence of mind, which is often the accompaniment of a sweet and easy temper, is, perhaps, a more frequent cause of miscarriage in private education than any other. It is a deceiver which, under the specious appearance of uncommon goodness, produces the most mischievous effects. Like charity, it "hopeth all things, believeth all things, and endureth all things;" but effecteth nothing. To a person of principle engaged in education, this easy indolence of temper is the greatest of all misfortunes, because it operates in such a manner as not to alarm the conscience. It never examines into motives, it never probes

the heart, or corrects the judgment, or restrains the passions, but contents itself with setting an example of moderation, and giving lessons on virtue. How ineffectual these may prove, where the passions have been permitted to reign without control, is beautifully exemplified in the history of Eli and his sons, as it is given in the simple and impressive language of Scripture. Happy were it, if the judgment pronounced against this indulgent father, at which, it was said, "that the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle," was engraven on every parent's heart.

Where, by the early unrestrained indulgence of self-will, the passions have been kindled into a flame, there is no need of a prophet from the LORD to foretell the unhappy consequences. But to these consequences the easy and indolent mother is obstinately blind; and while the discerning eye may behold in her children the seeds of every vice, she thanks God they are not vicious! But of what vices can children be

guilty? If they are now obstinate and disobedient, or passionate, peevish, and self-willed, is it not enough to alarm us for their future virtue? If they are in early life foolish, indolent, and trifling, how are these habits to be broken when they come to riper age? Where is the security that they will be ever broken? These habits, I shall be told, will all be conquered, and all the bad passions be subdued, by reason, as soon as the child is old enough to listen to its dictates. "Let the understanding be convinced of the advantages of virtue," say they, "and there is no doubt but that the conduct will be virtuous." This sort of argument in favour of an early indulgence of the passions, puts one in mind of the quack-doctor in the farce, who wished his patient to have all manner of diseases, in order to show the efficacy of his panacea in removing them. It supposes reason to work as a charm, and takes it for granted, that the understanding acts separately and independently of the passions and affec-

tions ; that it is at all times superior to their influence ; and that it is always capable of controlling their impetuosity.

Little must they have been accustomed to the task of self-examination, who can thus argue. Little must they have observed on human character, who have not in innumerable instances perceived the understanding dictating the opinions, while the passions governed the conduct. Where the selfish and dissocial passions have by frequent recurrence become habitual, it is in vain that we convince the reason of the bad consequence of their indulgence. The reason may be convinced most fully, and after full conviction have cause, on the first assault of passion, to exclaim with the Apostle, " That I do, I allow not ; for what I would, that do I not ; *but what I hate, that do I !*—for to *will* is present with me, *but how to perform that which is good I find not.*" For such as thus feel the inefficiency of reason to the control of the corrupt passions and desires of the heart, the only remedy

is that applied to by the apostle. The wisdom of man may probe the wound, but will never effect its cure.

The sovereign efficacy of religion in changing the heart I readily admit, and, while I bow with reverence and gratitude to the Throne of Grace, join my feeble voice to the emphatic conclusion of the Apostle, and "thank GOD, through Jesus Christ our LORD." But while I profess my confidence in the power of Divine Grace, I avail myself of the high authority already quoted, to condemn the conduct of those, who, by early fostering the seeds of passion, suffer their children to "abide in sin, in hope that grace may abound."

If we seriously desire to implant the benevolent affections in the infant heart, we must guard it with vigilance against pride, vanity, and envy; and for this end it will be extremely necessary to examine our own hearts, and set a watch upon our own conduct; taking special care, that what we call *affection* may not be tainted by the

very pride and vanity we deprecate. If our attention be prompted by pure affection, it will be directed to the happiness of the object; if by an affection in which the selfish passions mingle, it will be directed to adventitious circumstances, with which the real happiness of the child has no concern. Pure affection will guard against every danger, to which the inexperience and helplessness of infancy may be exposed, but it will not protract the period of helplessness and inexperience by unnecessary attendance and prevention; far less will it permit weakness and imbecility to assume the arrogance of command. The child, who knows itself the first object of attention to a whole family, who finds itself surrounded by beings who have no other employment than to gratify its capricious humours, or to assist its weakness and supply its wants, cannot fail of acquiring an early idea of its own consequence, and of thus having the seeds of pride sown in its heart. It may be worthy of a mother's observa-



tion, to mark the effects which the constant notice bestowed upon an infant has upon the mind. The child that has been accustomed to it cannot brook neglect; and so very early is this idea of self-consequence inspired, that I have seen an infant of six months old, who had been accustomed, on being brought into the room, to excite immediate attention, burst into a passion, and scream with rage and disappointment, on being permitted to remain a few minutes without being spoken to. Would it not be well to counteract this by a frequent repetition of those disappointments?

By being made occasionally to feel its weakness, a child learns to accept of the service of others as a benefit, which inspires love and gratitude. This may be done without the least harshness or severity; and, indeed, I am fully persuaded, that by proper attention the necessity for the exercise of any degree of harshness or severity may be entirely precluded.

The harmony that subsists among the virtues, is worthy of our highest admiration; nor can it be too often contemplated, or too deeply impressed. Filial duty prepares the mind for divine obedience; and filial love and gratitude open the heart to all the benevolent affections. Where the idea of duty either to GOD or parent is associated with slavish fear, unmixed with love and gratitude, it will produce a train of gloomy and discordant passions, which will render obedience an irksome and hateful task. It is then a painful yoke from which the mind will emancipate itself as soon as possible. But where notions of filial duty and divine obedience are early and firmly associated with the ideas of esteem, complacency, and delight; where a sense of received benefits has awakened a correspondent gratitude, and a consciousness of weakness has inspired humility, while the happiness in which the heart rejoices is looked on as the gift of goodness

and of love, all the best affections of the soul must inevitably be called forth.

It has been remarked by Mrs. More,\* "that filial obedience is not the character of the age; and that not only sons but daughters have adopted something of that spirit of independence, and disdain of control, which characterize the times." To the discussion of *the rights of man* this evil is in a subsequent passage attributed. But with all due deference to such respectable authority, I think the evil complained of may fairly be traced to a more natural and a more obvious source. Children surrounded from the cradle with all that can stimulate pride and vanity, encouraged to entertain a conceit of their own consequence, and to look down with disdain on all who are in an inferior situation in life; their appetites pampered, their wills uncontrolled, their inclinations perverted, their de-

\* See *Strictures on Female Education*.

sires inflamed, and their ideas of happiness associated with the gratification of their appetites and passions, cannot be expected to entertain notions of duty or obedience. In the passions and habits influenced by such circumstances, they will have more powerful incentives to the spirit of insubordination, than a respect for the rights of their fellow-creatures could possibly produce. The basis of filial obedience, and of every other virtue, will be very insecure if it be narrowed into party-prejudice. Let us endeavour to form it of materials less perishable. By impressing children with a proper sense of their own weakness, by inspiring them with gratitude and love toward all those from whom they receive assistance and protection, and by teaching them from infancy habits of submission to the dictates of superior age and wisdom, a foundation will certainly be laid for filial obedience, independent of any political creed; and if, in the cultivation of the understanding, care be taken not to destroy

what has been done for the cultivation of the heart, by an improper application of the stimulants of envy and vanity, we have reason to hope that the superstructure will be agreeable to our wishes.

## LETTER VII.

## ASSOCIATIONS DESTRUCTIVE OF BENEVOLENCE.

*Pernicious Effects of Partiality.—Of Ridicule.—  
Of Contempt for the Female Character.*

THE disposition to benevolence is sown and nourished in the grateful soil of family affection. Where children are educated upon sensible principles, so that their wills are not perpetually clashing with each other, mutual affection must naturally spring from sympathy in each other's joys, and the pleasure derived from each other's society. But this affection is too often nipped in the bud by the canker of parental partiality.

Children are so far conscious of their *rights*, as to feel that they have an equal

claim to the parent's tenderness and affection. Where this claim is not allowed, and capricious fondness singles out some particular objects on which to lavish its regards, it never fails to produce the worst consequences both on the favoured and neglected parties. In the former it engenders pride and arrogance, in the latter it brings forth indignation and hatred; and destroys the sense of justice in both. It too often happens, that personal defects, or personal charms, occasion this unfortunate bias in the mother's mind. Sometimes that briskness which is so frequently mistaken for genius, or that slowness which is confounded with stupidity, becomes an excuse for partiality or dislike; and sometimes no excuse is attempted, but the sensible one, that "it is a feeling which cannot be helped!"

Whatever may be the motive assigned for partiality to a favourite, or for dislike to an unfavoured child, the mother who indulges her feelings with regard to either, may be assured she is guilty of a crime of

no light dye. She, in the first place, breaks the bonds of family affection, and sows the seeds of discord among her children, which, as they grow up, produce envy, jealousy, and a perpetual recurrence of strife. Home is thus made a scene of displacency and discontent; than which nothing can be more inimical to the feelings of benevolence.

If the injury done to the rest of her offspring make a slight impression on the mother's heart, the injury done to the favourite by her ill-judged partiality is surely worthy her attention. Let the partial mother consider, that she is not only perverting the heart of her beloved darling by the introduction of all the passions connected with pride and arrogance, but, by rendering him an object of jealousy and envy, is begetting towards him the hatred and aversion of those, to whom in after life he ought naturally to look for solace and support; that she may be the means of depriving his youth of the blessings of fraternal affec-



tion, and his old age of the consolations of fraternal sympathy.

Nor is it the affection and good-will of his own family alone of which she robs him. No one can regard a spoiled child but with feelings of dislike. The faults which good-nature would overlook, the blemishes which compassion would regard with tenderness, become odious and revolting, when seen in the object of blind and dotting partiality. Can a mother compensate by her endearments for thus depriving her child of the good-will of brothers, sisters, relations, and friends?

The child who finds itself the object of dislike to every one besides, will, it is true, be induced to cling to her to whom alone it perceives itself an object of affection; and this exclusive preference is so pleasing to self-love, that a weak mother is sufficiently gratified by the expression of it, without troubling herself to examine the principles from which it flows.

In families where connubial harmony has not survived the honey-moon, wherein mutual esteem and mutual complacency have given place to the little jealousies of prerogative and the splenetic humours of contradiction, it is no uncommon thing to see the well-being and happiness of children sacrificed to the spirit of contention. In such families whatever incurs reproof or reprehension from one of the parties, is excused or applauded by the other. Whenever this species of counteraction takes place, we may bid adieu to all improvement, and, alas, how few are the number of families in which it does not in some degree take place! Even where the sentiments of father and mother completely harmonize, the children may still experience the baneful effects of the counteractions alluded to, in the extenuation of the faults complained of by the governess or master. Every attempt at such extenuation is matter of triumph to the faulty child, increases the strength of pride in its little bosom, and

produces a feeling of malignity towards the accuser, which may easily degenerate into habitual malice. No association can be more injurious than that which connects the ideas of malignant intention with every discovery of our faults, and leads us to attribute to goodness of heart every instance of blindness to our imperfections. To prevent the formation of this fatal association, children ought to be made sensible, that a perception of their faults does not diminish the love or regard of those by whom they are most clearly seen.

The feelings of benevolence will neither be uniform nor extensive in their operation, unless they are supported by a strong sense of justice. For this end, the necessity and propriety of practising the rule of "doing as they would be done by," ought to be early and forcibly inculcated on the minds of children; and as opportunities of inculcating it daily and hourly occur, they ought never to be passed in silence.

When a child has received pleasure from

the complaisance of a companion, or been gratified by any act of kindness or generosity, an appeal ought instantly to be made to his feelings, and the duty of contributing in a similar manner to the happiness of others, enforced at the moment when the mind is in a proper tone for the exercise of the sympathetic affections. When he has received any hurt or injury, instead of soothing his angry passions by taking part in his quarrel, the opportunity ought to be seized for recalling to his mind the petty injuries he may have inflicted on a companion on some former occasion, and thus inspiring him with a regard for the feelings of others.

An early and deep-founded sense of justice, is the proper soil wherein to nourish every moral virtue. Nor is it more essential towards the culture of the heart, than of the understanding. When we come to investigate the faculty of judgment, we shall have a fuller view of its important

consequences. At present I shall only urge the necessity of paying a strict attention to those early habits and associations, by which the sense of justice is diminished or destroyed.

I have already endeavoured to point out the danger of permitting young persons to attach ideas of contempt to any person, on account of involuntary defects, peculiar manners, or peculiar sentiments. Wherever contempt is felt, it must be accompanied with a consciousness of superiority; and if this consciousness of superiority be built on a bad foundation, pride and arrogance are the inevitable consequences.

What, then, shall we say for those parents, who encourage their children in a practice by which all the feelings of contempt, pride, and arrogance, are inspired and cherished? You will here anticipate my mention of mimicry and ridicule, which is often applauded in children as a proof of wit, while in reality it is the worst of folly.

Ridicule is a sacred weapon, which ought never to be lightly wielded. When applied to as the means of exposing sophistry, it is sanctioned by truth and justice ; though, even then, the person who dares to use it ought to be assuredly purified from every sinister motive.

By children it can never be applied to any useful purpose ; while, from the particular light in which it places the object of it to their imaginations, the judgment is perverted, and the nice feelings of moral justice completely destroyed.

Children who are brought up at great schools, seldom, I believe, escape this vice. The under-teachers at such seminaries are, in general, considered as butts, at which the darts of ridicule may be lawfully shot. Thus the infant wit is whetted by malignity ; the mind is corrupted, and rendered callous to every generous sentiment, while obstinacy and self-conceit lead to all the errors of presumption.

Would we implant the sense of justice in the heart, we must vigilantly guard it against those prejudices, which effectually check its growth, and prevent its ever coming to maturity. Of this nature, in my opinion, are those which originate in the early distinction that is made between the sexes, from which boys acquire ideas of an inherent superiority, grafted on pride, and supported by selfishness.

The foolish partiality, which some mothers evince toward their male offspring, is sometimes such as would induce a spectator to think they have embraced the opinion vulgarly attributed to Mahommed, and have been taught to believe that men only have souls; and that the female children, whom GOD has sent them, have been brought into the world for no other purpose than to contribute to the pleasure, and submit to the authority, of the lords of the creation. Were this, indeed, the case, it would still behoove the tender mother to consider, that, till the age when this

decided and incontrovertible superiority in every natural endowment was unequivocally displayed, a boy might be taught to respect the feelings of the companion in the sister, without injury to his inherent dignity ; and that the early sense of justice thus acquired, would produce habits of urbanity highly favourable to his happiness as well as to his virtue.

Christian mothers cannot, for their partiality, plead the same excuse that may be offered in favour of the Mahommedan. She who believes her daughters and her sons to be equally born heirs of immortality, equally favoured in the sight of the Most High, equally endowed with all that can exalt and ennoble human nature—the means of grace, and the hope of glory ; she who considers eternal misery as the consequence of vice, and eternal happiness as the reward of virtue, cannot show the preference of superior regard and affection on account of sex, independently of mental qualification, without a manifest de-



reliction of religious principle. Yet so powerful are first impressions, so strongly rooted are the prejudices of our education, that not even religion itself, no, not in minds where it is deeply cherished, can prevail against them. These are the tares which the enemy has sown while we slept; and which will continue to grow up with the wheat till the great and general harvest. Alas! who can tell how many of the opinions, we now so fondly cherish, may then be found in the number? "By far the greater part of the opinions, on which we act in life, are not (says Stewart) the result of our own investigations; but are adopted implicitly in infancy and youth, upon the authority of others. When a child hears either a speculative absurdity, or an erroneous principle of action, recommended and enforced daily by the same voice which first conveyed to it those simple and sublime lessons of morality and religion, which are congenial to its nature, is it to be wondered at, that in

future life it should find it so difficult to eradicate prejudices, which have twined their roots with all the essential principles of the human frame?" That a contempt of the female nature, and an overweening conceit of the essential superiority of that of the male, are of the number of these hereditary prejudices, will, I imagine, be no difficult matter to prove. Though as it is a prejudice that has "twined its roots," not only with the essential principles, but with the strongest passions of his nature, the hopes of eradicating it must be faint and remote.

The obstinacy of prejudices received from early association, is commonly in proportion to the mixture of truth with error. Had nature, indeed, made no distinction in the mental endowments of the sexes, the prejudice alluded to would long since have yielded to conviction; but the distinction made by nature, which is merely such as to render each sex most fit and capable to fulfil the duties of its peculiar sphere, confers neither superiority on the one, nor

degradation on the other. Of all that is truly worthy, of all that is truly estimable, in the sight of GOD and man, both sexes are capable alike. Excited to similar virtue by similar motives, exposed to similar temptations by similar passions and frailties, would it not be wise, if, instead of strengthening these passions by mutual jealousy concerning objects of comparatively small importance, they endeavoured to be mutually instrumental in the support of each other's virtue? This, I am convinced, would be much more commonly the case, were it not for the prevalence of that prejudice, which teaches even boys to regard females with contempt, as beings of an inferior order.

All the prejudices which originate in early association, are for a time deemed obvious and incontrovertible truths, discovered by the light of nature. Thus, while the West-Indian planter judges the jetty skin of the negro a mark of inferiority inscribed by the hand of the Great Creator, to point out the

immensity of the distance between him and his sable brethren; the African, seated under the bentang tree of his native village, and listening to the tale of the stranger, regards the white skin of the European with disgust and horror, as the signet of nature stamped with the character of cruelty and cunning. Thus too does man, in every nation, and in every stage of society, from the associations of his infancy, attach to the weakness arising from the more delicate structure of the female frame, ideas of contempt and inferiority.

In order to analyze this prejudice, it is necessary to trace it to its source, that is to say, to the *savage state*, in which it evidently originated; for in the savage state bodily strength gives an indisputable title to superiority. Man is, in this state, distinguished from the brute, chiefly by the possession of improvable faculties: but this is a latent treasure, of which he is long insensible; and while he remains in ignorance, he is, in some respects, beneath his

brothers of the field. The lion brings not his weaker mate into a state of slavish subjection, but, inspired by instinct, lays at her feet the spoils his strength and courage have procured; while the savage, his inferior in all but pride and cruelty, treats the miserable partner of his hut with contumelious disdain and rigorous oppression. The poor female, subdued by habitual wretchedness to habitual submission, acquiesces in her miserable destiny; and while she teaches her daughters to submit with cheerfulness to the doom of slavery, she inspires her sons with savage notions of their own comparative importance, and glories in the first indications of their haughtiness and ferocity; dispositions with which she associates the ideas of strength and valour, which comprise all that is in her view great and honourable.

As society advances in its progress toward civilization, the mental powers begin to rise into importance; but the associations of contempt, which the inferiority,

with regard to physical strength, had originally generated, continue to operate, and debar females from those opportunities of improvement, which gradually open on the other sex. Thus we still find in many nations of Asia, where society is advanced to a considerable degree of refinement, this refinement entirely confined to the men; the women being still destined to all the miseries of ignorance and slavery. Thus throughout the world, while man advanced in knowledge and science, from merely physical to rational life, women were doomed to remain stationary; till the distance between the sexes was deemed as great with regard to mental endowments in the civilized state, as it had been with respect to personal strength in the savage.

A lively picture is given by the Eastern writers, of the consequences of this continued degradation of the female character. It is, however, worthy of remark, that the vices of which they uniformly accuse women are the vices of slaves; and that while

innate depravity is by them constantly attributed to the sex, the cause of this depravity is never once hinted at, though it must be sufficiently obvious to every unprejudiced mind.

A more enlightened policy than was ever known to Oriental wisdom elevated the European nations of antiquity to nobler sentiments, and more enlarged views; but so deeply rooted are the prejudices of early association, nourished by habit, and strengthened by the pride of power, that neither legislator, philosopher, priest, or poet, appears to have been superior to their control. The prejudices of the savage state, with regard to women, continued to operate on the enlightened sages of the Grecian and Roman world, even while, in the intercourse of social life, the minds of the females of Greece and Rome acquired a degree of improvement, which elevated their sentiments to high notions of honour and virtue. The improvement was casual, the effect transient. The virtue, that is

merely the effect of imitation, cannot be expected to survive its model. Never taught to consider themselves as having an inherent interest in the cultivation of their faculties, they learned to value their virtues and accomplishments, not as intrinsically their own, but as shedding a lustre on the house from which they sprung, or on that to which they were allied. Virtues built on such a shallow foundation might be brilliant, but could not be comprehensive or durable. It was, however, the only foundation, which the pride of man, in the most advanced state of human knowledge, allowed for female virtue; nor did it ever enter into the heart of the most philanthropic sage, to place it on the same foundation as his own.

That to which human philanthropy and human wisdom were unequal, was accomplished by Divine.

Were there no other proofs of the superiority of our blessed Saviour to the wisest of the sons of men, his superiority to all



the prejudices of his age, and country, and sex, and situation, would, I think, be sufficient to prove him more than human.

By making the purification of the heart, and the subjugation of the passions, alike the duty of all, he broke down the barrier which pride and prejudice had placed between the sexes. He elevated the weaker, not by the pride of intellect, but by the dignity of virtue. He changed the associations of honour and esteem from the *nature of the duty* to its due performance; and promised eternal life as the reward, not of great talents or elegant accomplishments, not of valour, or of renown, or of worldly wisdom, but of a pure faith, producing a pure heart and undefiled conscience.

So far did this doctrine operate, that wherever it was embraced, it procured for women, as heirs of immortality, a degree of respect to which the philosophy of Greece and Rome had never elevated them.

But the doctrine of Christ was embraced nominally by millions, who remained stran-

gers to the spirit of its precepts. It was made to bend to human passions and human prejudices, with which it was so blended, as to become distorted and disgraced. The instructions which our Saviour and his Apostles addressed indiscriminately to the poor and to the rich, to the learned and the ignorant, to *men* and to *women*, were supposed, in process of time, to be incomprehensible to all but the priesthood, which arrogated to itself the privilege of explaining them. The explanations being generally tinctured by prejudice, and not unfrequently by prejudices of the impurest sort, originating in the selfish passions, were opposed, contested, censured, till the passions were inflamed into resentment; and both parties became infinitely more zealous for the establishment of their own particular explanations, than for the diffusion of the spirit of the Gospel. Had that spirit continued to preserve its influence on the human heart, great is the alteration which would have

undoubtedly been produced on the human character. But instead of subduing the passions that opposed it, these passions were enlisted in support of what was called by its name. Prejudices, which the example and doctrines of our Divine Master would have completely overthrown, became thus in a manner sanctified by their alliance with superstition; and selfishness continued to justify injustice. That the prejudices of the savage state should continue to prevail in the ages of barbarism, when the light shed by the Christian dispensation was veiled in impenetrable darkness, is not surprising; but that these prejudices should continue to prevail after this veil was removed, appears a little extraordinary, though the cause may easily be ascertained.

When the light of science began to illumine our long-benighted hemisphere, and the art of printing diffused those treasures of knowledge, which had been a useless deposit in the hands of ignorance and su-

perstition, an enthusiastic admiration of the writings of the ancients was generally inspired. Devoted to the study of heathen wisdom, men forgot, or lightly esteemed, the fountain of truth; they beheld it agitated by theological controversy, and polluted by theological prejudice, and turned from it with disgust; not permitting themselves to examine, whether a stream so polluted could have its source in Divine perfection.—The consequence has long been, still is, and may long continue, fatal to the cause of sound morality and virtue.

However the study of the classics may have opened the understanding, enlarged the views, and elevated the sentiments of men, it is to be feared, that many prejudices have flowed from the same source, which are inconsistent with the spirit of the religion we profess; prejudices that are inimical to that spirit, at variance with the whole tenor of our Saviour's precepts, and the cause of a perpetual and manifest inconsistency between the practice and

profession of Christians. These prejudices have thrown a shade of ignominy over the mild glories of humility, meekness, and mercy ; and exalted pride and revenge into the rank of virtues. They have substituted the love of glory for the love of truth, emblazoned the crimes of ambition with the lustre of renown, and taught man to prefer the applause of a giddy multitude to the approbation of his GOD. By introducing false associations of regard and preference, with adventitious circumstances, altogether foreign to the moral character, as learning, strength, valour, power, &c. they have destroyed the just criterion of human worth, and given to situation, which marks the nature of the duty to be performed, that respect which is morally due to the just performance of duty. These prejudices have all an evident tendency to continue and perpetuate the ideas of sexual superiority, which would infallibly have been destroyed by the pure morality of the Gospel. They have grati-

fed the pride of man at the expence of his virtue.

With a contempt for the female sex, on account of this fancied inferiority, has been associated a contempt for those moral qualities, which are allowed to constitute the perfection of the female character. Meekness, gentleness, temperance, and chastity; that command over the passions which is obtained by frequent self-denial; and that willingness to sacrifice every selfish wish, and every selfish feeling, to the happiness of others, which is the consequence of subdued self-will, and the cultivation of the social and benevolent affections; are considered as feminine virtues, derogatory to the dignity of the manly character. Nay, further. By this unfortunate association has religion itself come into disgrace; devotional sentiment is considered as a mere adjunct of female virtue, suitable to the weakness of the female mind, *and for that reason* disgraceful to the superior wisdom of man. At the thought of *judgment* to

*come*, women, like Felix, may learn to tremble; and, in order to avert the consequences of Divine displeasure, may study the practice of that righteousness and temperance recommended by the Apostle to his royal auditor: but while the Christian graces are associated with that contempt which the idea of inferiority inspires, neither righteousness, nor temperance, nor judgment to come, will be considered as worthy of consideration in the mind of man.

This unhappy prejudice is in some respects far less injurious to the female than to the male. The obedience which they are taught to pay to authority, the submission with which they are made to bow to arrogance and injustice, produce habits of self-denial favourable to disinterestedness, meekness, and humility; dispositions which are allied to every species of moral excellence. And so seldom do these amiable dispositions fail to be produced by the subjugation of self-will, in females who have

been properly educated, that in combating the prejudice which throws contempt upon the female character, I shall be found to plead the cause of the other sex rather than of my own.—Every prejudice founded in selfishness and injustice inevitably corrupts the mind, and every act of tyranny resulting from it debases the human character; but submission “for conscience sake,” even to the highest degree of tyranny and injustice, is an act, not of meanness, but of magnanimity. Instead of murmuring at the circumstances under which they are placed, women ought early to be taught to turn those very circumstances to their advantage, by rendering them conducive to the cultivation of all the milder virtues. And this they would not fail to do, unless they were made to participate in those prejudices which I have humbly attempted to explain, and to expose.

By far the greater part of those, who have hitherto taken upon them to stand forth as champions for sexual equality,



have done it upon grounds that to me appear indefensible, if not absurd. It is not an equality of moral worth for which they contend, and which is the only true object of regard; not for an equality of rights, with respect to the Divine favour, which alone elevates the human character into dignity and importance; but for an equality of employments and avocations, founded upon the erroneous idea of a perfect similarity of powers. Infected by the prejudices which associate ideas of honour and esteem with knowledge and science, independent of moral virtue, and envious of the short-lived glories of ambition, they desire for their sex an admission into the theatre of public life, and wish to qualify them for it by an education in every respect similar to that of men. Men scoff at their pretences, and hold their presumption in abhorrence; but men do not consider, that these pretences, and that presumption, have been caught from the false notions of importance which they have themselves

affixed to their own particular avocations. Taught, from earliest infancy, to arrogate to themselves a claim of inherent superiority, this idea attaches itself to all the studies and pursuits which custom has exclusively assigned them. These prejudices operating likewise on the minds of women, it is not surprising, that those who perceive in themselves a capacity for attaining a high degree of intellectual eminence, should aspire to be sharers in those honours, which they have been taught by the pride of men to regard as supreme distinction. Were both sexes guarded from the admission of early prejudice, and taught to value themselves on no superiority but that of virtue, these vain and idle jealousies would cease; man would become more worthy, and woman more respectable. Were these prejudices annihilated, the virtues of temperance and chastity would not in the mind of man be associated with ideas of contempt, as merely proper to be observed by the inferior part of the species; nor

would habits of licentiousness be considered as a light and venial evil, but regarded with the same horror which is happily still attached to female depravity.

Of the licentiousness of one sex, however, the depravity of the other is the natural and certain consequence. Accustomed to acquiesce in the idea of man's superiority in all wisdom and perfection, women cease to respect those laws of decency and reserve, which they perceive to be the glory of the other sex to set at defiance. They learn to consider the restrictions of chastity as the fetters of worldly prudence; and as those, to whom they are accustomed to look up, as beings of a superior order, scoff at that religion which teaches purity of heart, as well as manners, they likewise learn to regard it with contempt. The *believing wife* is, from the prejudices of early association, considered as too much inferior, in point of intellect and intelligence, to have any chance of converting the *unbelieving husband*; while a thousand to one

are in favour of the unbelieving husband's perverting the believing wife !

If such are the consequences of sexual prejudice, it becomes the duty of every parent, who is anxious for the temporal and eternal happiness of the beings intrusted to her care, to guard against its introduction into the infant mind. For this end, she must carefully and conscientiously maintain a strict impartiality in the distribution of favour and affection. There must be no separate rules of discipline ; no system of individual and partial indulgence, nor partial restriction, nor partial exemption ; but one law of propriety, decency, modesty, and simplicity ; one rule of humble submission and cheerful obedience. Boys and girls must equally be made to perceive, that there is but one path to approbation and esteem, *the path of duty* ; and made to feel that they are approved of and esteemed on no other principle.

I can see no good reason why, in early life, their tasks and instructions should not

be the same. Is it because the superior portion of reason supposed to be inherent in man is so very evidently equal to the government of his passions, that we think we may safely neglect in infancy the culture of his heart? Or has the instinctive faculty of imitation proved so efficient a guide to the other sex; has it always so certainly led to the performance of the important duties assigned to females in civilized society, as to justify us in withholding from them the advantages of mental cultivation? Such seem to have been the opinions on which the common practice has been founded. But before we implicitly adopt them, it is surely proper to ascertain, whether they have originated in prejudice, or have been justified by long and ample experience.

The pride and arrogance, which boys acquire from early ideas of inherent superiority, are greatly increased by the premature distinction that is made between their pursuits and avocations, and those of

girls. The trifling accomplishments, to which the girls are devoted, they despise as irrational; while consciousness of the superior dignity of that species of knowledge into which they are early initiated, augments their supercilious disdain, and increases the idea of the distance that is placed between them. They soon cease to tolerate them as companions, but regard them as incumbrances, at once troublesome and despicable.

In men of little minds this early-acquired contempt for the female character takes deep and lasting root. It is an everlasting source of consolation to their pride, and a happy excuse for the exercise of a selfish tyranny over the unfortunate females of their families. Where the mind is enlightened and the heart is generous, this early prejudice will cease to operate; but its strength is not always in proportion to the weakness of the character. To what but to this early prejudice, can we ascribe the conduct of some men of sense, in the

most important concern of life? Having never experienced any pleasure in female society but through the medium of passion, by passion only are they guided in the choice of a connexion sacred and indissoluble. Passion is short-lived; but when passion is no more, a sense of common interest, habit, and necessity, happily unite their forces to keep off wretchedness. Without their powerful aid, how miserable must existence drag on in the society of a person, with whom there is no intercourse of intellect, no interchange of sentiment, no similarity of taste, no common object of pursuit, no common subject of conversation! To be tied to one week of such society would be misery. What, then, shall we say to those, who voluntarily tie themselves to it for life? To the children of such marriages the contempt for the female character is inevitable. It is with them an hereditary sentiment, confirmed by the father's conduct, and the mother's folly. In such families, it may easily be supposed, that a

distinction will soon be made between the boys and girls; a distinction, which, if it prove injurious to the male, is no less fatal to the female mind.

By the early associations above described, girls learn to place the virtues recommended to their practice on an improper basis; not founded on immutable truth, but on worldly notions of prudence and propriety. It is in reality *manners*, not *morals*, which they thus acquire. Opinion is the idol they are taught to worship. Opinion is their rule of life, their law of virtue; and fashion, their only test of propriety. Hence we behold decency outraged in the dress and behaviour of women, who assume the appellation of virtuous! We behold modesty depending on the caprice of fashion; and by the ease with which it is plucked up by the roots at her decree, we may judge of the lightness of the soil in which it was planted.



By these early associations, which render opinion the test of truth, the female mind is so much perverted, as to render it in some degree dangerous for us to rise above the prejudices of education. For want of proper notions of the immutability of moral truth, females, who have had sufficient strength of mind to emancipate themselves from the dominion of opinion, have sometimes been seen to despise the virtues they had in early life learned to associate with it, and to pique themselves on a dereliction of the peculiar duties of their sex and station. From these examples, plausible arguments have been formed against the cultivation of the female mind. But a more enlarged view of the subject would afford different conclusions. Where judicious care has been exercised in the cultivation of the moral and intellectual faculties in early life, the respect for virtue is placed on a more permanent foundation. The female who is taught an early and habitual respect to the laws of GOD, and has ac-

quired just notions of moral obligation, will, by every step in the cultivation of her reason, acquire fresh motives to the practice of her duties, and will, at the same time, be preserved from the vanity which is so prone to over-rate the value of every attainment.

By the early distinction that is made between the sexes, the idea of a distinct and separate code of morality is inevitably inspired; and if the consequences of this idea be such as I have represented them, it is incumbent on parents to consider how the evil may be avoided. Far am I from considering the preservation of female delicacy as a matter of slight importance; but it is in the purity of the heart, and not in a deference to public opinion, that I would fix its basis. To guard the purity of the heart from spot or blemish, is, in a private family, brought up under the eye of a judicious parent, no difficult task.\* But the

\* There is no point in which the conduct of servants toward children ought to be more severely scrutinized,

purity that depends solely on innocent ignorance, is liable to be soiled on the slightest exposure. It may be contaminated by chance, and receive a lasting stain through the medium of a natural curiosity. It is not by mere ignorance of evil, that genuine delicacy can be inspired. If pains be not taken, at an early period of life, firmly to associate the ideas of personal delicacy and personal decency with the ideas of propriety and virtue, and to attach ideas of shame and remorse to the smallest breach of the laws of decorum, our pupils may remain personally unpolluted from principle, but they will have little chance of being numbered with the "pure in heart."

It is, I am well convinced, only by attaching ideas of disgust and abhorrence to every sentiment, every circumstance, and

than in that to which I now allude; for in none do I believe it more generally reprehensible. Would we have delicacy fixed in the heart, infancy itself must be treated with decency and respect.

every idea, which can tend to soil the purity of the imagination, that we can hope to inspire that species of delicacy, which, like the beautiful armour that nature has bestowed upon some plants and flowers, is at once a guard and ornament. Let it be firmly fixed in the mind, by the methods I have mentioned, let it be strengthened by frequent communication with the Author of all purity and all perfection, and we need entertain no apprehension, that it will be injured by learning, or contaminated by science. Often, I fear, is this delicacy a stranger to the hearts of those, who nevertheless assume its appearance. But where it is only assumed, it will, like other parts of dress, obey the decrees of fashion, and be reserved for particular occasions; whereas the sensibility arising from unsoiled purity is seen

“ In all the thousand decencies that flow  
From ev’ry word and action.”

The delicacy that is produced by associa-

tion, and confirmed by religious principle, will be found as superior to the spurious sort born of affectation and sentiment, (which is often only another word for affectation,) as reality is to fiction. The former is unalterable and undeviating, while the latter is ever liable to be contaminated by the contagion of example, and to vary with situation and circumstances.

Modesty has been with much truth and propriety represented as the first ornament of the female mind; but it may be questioned, whether both sexes have not been injured by considering it as a *sexual* virtue. Why should not boys be inspired with the feelings of delicacy as well as girls? Why should the early corruption of their imagination be deemed a matter of light importance? What do we gain by attaching ideas of manliness and spirit to depravity of heart and manners? Alas, many and fatal are the errors, which may be traced to this unfortunate association! Let it be the endeavour of my friends to guard

their sons from its pernicious effects ; and may they in their future lives evince, that dignity of conduct, elevation of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are connected with modesty, purity, and virtue ! Adieu.

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## LETTER VIII.

### SELFISHNESS.

*Selfishness acknowledged to be odious.—How excited in the infant mind.—Consequences of pampering the appetite for dainties.—Of giving Children the power of controlling their desires.—Examples.*

IF we wish to describe a character completely odious, we have only to say that the selfish passions have possession of his heart ; and that he is a stranger to every generous and benevolent affection.

We are all willing to make allowance for some evidences of self-love ; but with feelings that are purely selfish, no human being can sympathize. Where selfish motives are suspected, the bare suspicion of their existence excites disgust ; where they are openly avowed, they excite not only dis-

gust, but indignation; and as the esteem and sympathy of our fellow-creatures is necessary to our happiness, Providence has thus, in the very principles of our nature, placed a check on the selfishness which we are conscious would render us detestable.

But though we acknowledge selfishness to be odious, we, nevertheless, are at infinite pains to cherish in the infant mind the germ of those selfish passions which excite our abhorrence. We despise the man who has no control over his sensual appetites, and esteem the person who evinces by his conduct, that the selfish and sensual passions have no dominion over him; and yet, we generally act towards children, in the first years of infancy, as if to gratify the sensual appetites, and to indulge the selfish passions, were the sole end of their existence!

We seem to consider the pampering of the appetite, as the surest mark of affection, and endeavour to stimulate it, by all the means in our power; and by this mis-



taken conduct permanently associate the idea of supreme pleasure with sensual gratification. Hence proceeds the early licentiousness of youth, the uncontrollable-ness of desire, and that degrading habit of self-indulging indolence, which is inimical to the cultivation of every social, and every patriotic virtue. It is observed that, in the history of mankind, every age is distinguished by some characteristic feature, some peculiar vice or virtue, which becomes so universally prevalent as to characterise the general mass. Let us ask whether luxury and selfishness will not, by the future historian, be, with too much truth, attributed to the present times? It is for the mothers, to whom I now address myself, to arrest the destructive progress of the vices which have never failed to accelerate the fall of nations, and by enabling their sons to rise superior to the temptations which assail them, to give a new stamp to the character of the age in which they live.

As to her own child, at least, every mother may succeed in teaching him to restrain the selfish passions, provided she can lay the necessary restraint upon her own inclinations, when they prompt to the exercise of unlimited indulgence.

From the divine teacher, whose lessons evince the most perfect knowledge of the human heart, we learn, that a complete mastery over the selfish passions, is only to be obtained by the practice of self-denial. Self-denial is represented in Scripture to be essentially requisite towards the due performance of all our various duties; and is particularly necessary towards the performance of the social duties: for never can we obey the golden rule of doing as we would be done by, until we have learned to restrain the passions and desires which terminate in *self*. Without having been early accustomed to control these passions, we will find it difficult to be always just, and impossible ever to be generous. Do you wish your children to have

a nice sense of justice, and to be alive to the impulses of benevolence? *Teach them to deny themselves.* Begin by times to make them restrain the impetuosity of self-will, and to control the ardour of inclination. When there are several children in a family, a degree of emulation, with regard to the practice of self-denial, may be very advantageously excited. But beware of introducing vanity as an accompaniment. I have seen children praised for little acts of self-denial, until the heart swelled with vanity, and thus the selfish passions, instead of being restrained, were only hurried into another channel. In place of counteracting one selfish passion, by another equally selfish, we ought to convince our children, that they rise in our esteem by showing themselves capable of exercising a command over the inclinations which they are most strongly impelled to gratify. The child who can relinquish the indulgence of a present inclination, in the hope of a future enjoyment, has made one step in the

progress to virtue. An apple, or an orange, even a raisin or sugar-plum, committed to his keeping, on the promise that if they are produced at a certain time, he shall be rewarded by some gratification of a higher order, will soon render this species of self-denial easy and familiar.

In a family where this experiment has been tried with great success, I have known it followed up in the manner I am going to relate. When the dessert had just been served up, and the little creatures seated round the table, viewing with wistful eyes two heaped dishes of strawberries, the first of the season, to which they were in joyful expectation of being immediately helped,—the lady who presided paused, and addressing herself to her dear little flock, asked who would prefer going out in the coach with her, on a visit to the cottage of —, to a plate of strawberries? She desired that each would freely make their choice. In a moment, four of the six declared for the coach; the other

two hesitated, looked at the tempting fruit, and having, in vain, endeavoured to extort a promise of getting strawberries to supper, preferred the present pleasure, and were helped accordingly. Care was taken to make the excursion as agreeable to the others as possible. The love of novelty inherent in the infant mind, threw a charm over all the scenes they visited; and made the quaint devices of a rustic gardener seem transcendently beautiful. Loaded with flowers which they had leave to pick and choose for themselves, they returned in the highest possible state of enjoyment; and added not a little to the mortification of the brother and sister they had left at home, by a lively recital of their adventures. "And are we never to go to the cottage!" cried little George, sorrowfully. "No, my dear, he was answered.—You and your sister, preferred the pleasure of eating strawberries to the pleasure of seeing the cottage, and you

must abide by the consequences of your choice."

"Is there any harm in liking strawberries?" asked the little girl.

"No harm in liking strawberries, or any thing that is good. But then, my dear children, there is harm in not being able to give up what we like whenever it is wise to give it up. If I had thought there was harm in eating strawberries, I would have forbidden you to eat them, and then you would have been a bad child if you had not immediately desisted. I gave you liberty to chuse, and therefore you were not a bad child, you were only in this instance a foolish child, and made a foolish choice."

But who, cries some self-indulgent parent, who could have the heart to tantalize poor children at such a rate! The pretty dears are so fond of good things, and it is so natural they should be fond of them, that it would be absurd as well as cruel, to refuse them such an innocent indulgence."

I would neither refuse them any innocent indulgence, nor would I seek to make them insensible to the difference between what is palatable and otherwise; but I should endeavour to prevent their becoming slaves to the pleasures of sense; and therefore would be at pains to assist them in acquiring a command over their inclinations. Instead of calling in the imagination to stimulate appetite, I should employ imagination in a contrary direction, and endeavour, by its means, to make the measures of sense appear secondary, and subordinate to the pleasures of intellect. The more powerfully the desire of any species of gratification has been excited, the more severe will be the pain inflicted by every instance of self-denial; and as human nature is averse to suffering, we cannot expect, that, where the pain of self-denial is great, it will be voluntarily, or even patiently endured. By stimulating the appetite, we encrease the pain of self-denial to this pitch, and render disapp-

pointment insupportable. When a child has learned to attach ideas of happiness to eating of every dainty that he sees, he must attach ideas of misery to forbearance. To tantalize him with the sight of any good things which he is forbidden to taste is then cruelty, and cannot fail to excite in his bosom the feelings of resentment and discontent. But where the imagination has not been thus inflamed, where the idea of extraordinary gratification has never been connected with the idea of eating niceties, hunger will be satisfied with plain food in the midst of rarities, and a child will have no more desire to cloy his stomach with pastry than to corrode it by spirituous liquors.

It will I believe be admitted, that if we, in our anxious wish to indulge the appetite, injure the natural sprightliness of infancy, and diminish the capacity of enjoyment, the child has no reason to bless our ill-judged tenderness. Let us see whether the indulgence of which we now speak be really productive of such effects.



Observe the conduct of a spoiled child, when permitted to sit at a table spread with variety ; see its greedy eye wandering from dish to dish, eager to taste of all, and unsatisfied with every thing it tastes. To the meat that is put upon its plate, the fish seems preferable ; the meat is then sent off, and the fish supplies its place : still the pouting lip proclaims dissatisfaction.

“ It wants sauce ! ”

“ Sauce, my love, is not good for children.”

“ But I must have it ! I must have sauce ! ” is the imperious answer.

“ Well, don’t cry, love, and you shall have it, if you are good ; good children, you know, deserve to have what they like, when they ask it prettily.”

The sauce is given ; but still dissatisfaction prevails. The pie, the pudding, the tart, the cheesecake, and all the long *et cetera* of dainties, are each in turn the object of desire, of entreaty ; till surfeited

to loathing, with a stomach gorged but not satisfied, the young gentleman is dismissed to exercise in another scene the blessed tempers engendered by this unlimited indulgence.

By every species of indulgence which inflames the desire of gratifying self-will, the temper is in some degree injured; but by this of which we are now speaking, it is injured beyond all calculation.

As the reasoning of a sensible physician upon this subject may have some weight with those who judge of every truth by the authority that supports it, I gladly adduce the following observations in proof of my assertion. “ The food which recruits the  
 “ exhausted powers of animal nature, *ex-*  
 “ *hilarates* and *invigorates the mind*; the *ex-*  
 “ *cess* which burdens the body, *benumbs the*  
 “ *powers of the soul*. Whatever produces  
 “ an uneasy sensation in the corporeal sys-  
 “ tem, is apt to render the mind peevish  
 “ and fretful, and dispose it to be much  
 “ more affected than usual by incidents of

“ a disagreeable nature. Again ; those  
 “ things which heat and irritate to a con-  
 “ siderable degree, foster all turbulent and  
 “ irritable passions. The painful and com-  
 “ fortless sensations produced by flatulen-  
 “ cies and indigestions in hypochondriac  
 “ temperaments, have sometimes produced,  
 “ and sometimes been mistaken for, an  
 “ anxious state of mind ; and the medicines  
 “ which relieve the one will administer com-  
 “ fort to the other.” \*

Who can read the above statement, and  
 not bow with reverence to the Divine wis-  
 dom, which enjoyed self-denial as a duty  
 no less necessary to happiness than to vir-  
 tue? In vain doth an intellectual being  
 seek for felicity in the enjoyments of a  
 brute. In these the brute will still be his  
 superior ; no epicure perhaps enjoying the  
 pleasures of a first-rate feast with the same  
 zest that his well-fed pig guttles the wash-  
 ings of his dishes.

\* Cogan on the Passions.

“ Is joy the daughter of severity ?

*It is—Yet far my doctrine from severe.” \**

They are the unkind, they the cruel, who would first inflame the passions by early indulgence, and then weakly endeavour to diminish their influence by chastisement. I, on the contrary, should direct my utmost vigilance to prevent the rise and growth of the ungrateful and malevolent passions, and by this mean supersede the necessity of correction and punishment. They act like the unwise and improvident legislators, whose regulations tend to corrupt the morals of a people, while their laws of punishment are written in blood. I should follow the example of those rulers, (if such there were) who made it their endeavour to *prevent crimes*, rather than their business to punish them.

“ *All children are gluttons,*” says Rousseau, who was himself a glutton, most likely from mismanagement in infancy ; and

\* Young.

children brought up on his plan of indulged self-will may be expected to remain the slaves of appetite through life. Rousseau speaks from his experience; permit me to speak from mine, in contradiction to his assertion. Of the companions of my infancy I remember but one or two, who would not have disdained the idea of being fond of the indulgence of the palate, which they were taught to consider as mean and degrading. The consequence of this association was, that the pocket-money, which, where another plan of early education prevails, is spent in gormandizing, and thus becomes the instrument of selfishness and sensuality, was often spent by them in charity, and thereby rendered instrumental to the cultivation of habits of benevolence. I know those who from five years of age had a liberal supply of pocket-money, and on looking back through all the intervening period, can aver, that they never laid out one farthing in the purchase of fruit, cake, or sweetmeat, for their own

eating ; but who with infinite pleasure can dwell on their little acts of infant charity, when the pure heart first felt the glow of sympathy, and rejoiced in conscious beneficence !

Who will assert, that these feelings do not give a higher relish to existence, than the selfish pleasure of guzzling can bestow ? And yet, by the pains taken to render eating the prime object of enjoyment, one should imagine that the happiness it confers was deemed paramount and supreme.

Nor is it the pleasures of the palate alone, to which a human being ought to be made superior. Many are the evils arising from ill-judging tenderness, which, from an anxiety to avert all present suffering, lays up woes innumerable as the portion of futurity.

By the great attention that is paid to their accommodation in every trifling particular, children learn to attach an idea of importance to every personal indulgence,

and consider ease and freedom from pain as their birthright. They are thus enfeebled by luxury from the very cradle; and rendered totally unable to cope with those hardships and difficulties, which they may have to encounter in after-life. Should neither hardships nor difficulties be their lot, the evil will be still more serious; for the dispositions and habits of mind engendered by this attention to personal indulgence, will then have nothing to counteract them, and complete selfishness must be the consequence.

Would we seriously consider and weigh the difficulty of changing associations, that are early and strongly fixed in the mind, we should be less sanguine concerning the effects of that part of education, on which our hopes and expectations are chiefly placed. Small is the influence which the lessons received from books have upon the passions and affections of the heart, where these have not been predisposed to the impression.

In vain, to a child brought up in the lap of luxury and indulgence, will you point out the virtues of an ancient hero, in the fond hope of inspiring esteem and emulation. Do you in reality admire the virtues you recommend to his imitation? Reflect how they were acquired. That it was in the school of simplicity and rigid discipline, that the greatest men, who adorn the page of history, were taught to attain an ascendancy over the selfish passions, by the early habits of obedience and self-denial. Had their early ideas of happiness been associated with the idea of self-indulgence, Fabricius would have bartered his honour for gold, and Cato been the enslaver of his country. It is the uniform tenor of precept and example, wrought into habit, and confirmed into principle, that can alone produce a permanent effect upon the youthful mind. The whole experience of mankind bears testimony to this truth; and yet, with all the experience of mankind before our eyes, we cherish the idea of effect-



ing wonders by giving our children lessons of virtue, and storing their memories with facts and theories. Let us look into the instructive page of history, and be convinced of the sandy foundation on which we build our hopes. Why, in the decline of the Roman empire, does every noble, every generous sentiment, seem to have been extinguished? Instead of the martial and gallant spirit of their virtuous ancestors, why do we behold nought but one black catalogue of crimes and vices; cruelty and cowardice linked to luxury and pride; perfidy and ingratitude, joined to superstition and sloth? Was it because there were no schools in the city of Constantine? because in the Western empire the youth were without instruction? No. The sages and orators of ancient Greece and Rome still spoke to their degenerate sons. Their precepts were familiar to the ears of the preceptor and the pupil. The seed remained, but the soil was lost. The associations of honour and esteem were

changed. The luxury and indulgence, to which they were accustomed from the cradle, rendered luxury and indulgence the primary objects of desire. The ideas of glory, honour, and renown, which, in former ages, had been connected with the virtues of the patriot and the hero, were now attached to the splendour of dress, the smiles of the prince, and the admiration of the populace.

The character must ever rise or fall, in exact proportion to the object of ambition. When that is elevated and sublime, approved of GOD and conscience, it will call forth the noblest energies and affections of the human soul; but when base and ignoble, it will not fail to corrupt and vilify the nature. Let such, then, as are engaged in the formation of the infant mind, remember, that where an inordinate desire for sensual and selfish gratification predominates in the heart, the grand object of ambition will be low and sordid, for it will centre in *self*. That, "as the strength of

the body lies chiefly in being able to endure hardships, so also does that of the mind. And that the great principle and foundation of all virtue is placed in this, tha man is able to *deny himself* his own desires, cross his own inclinations, and purely follow what reason directs as best, though the appetite lean the other way." \*

Let the fond parent examine the magnitude of the barrier she throws in the way of her child's ever attaining this necessary ascendancy over the selfish and distocial passions, when she stimulates his desires by fond and pampering indulgence. Let her, therefore, learn to deny herself in this particular; and if she wishes to see her children really happy, let her make it her business to excite and cherish the benevolent and social affections in their little souls; for in the exercise of these, the true happiness of intellectual beings, through every stage of existence, will be found to consist.

\* Locke.

All young creatures are naturally disposed to joy. They evidently, from a very early period, derive great delight, not only from the pleasures of taste, but from the pleasures of sight and sound, &c.

The pleasurable sensation produced in early infancy by the exercise of the new-born faculties, is doubtless intended by the wisdom of Providence as a source of happiness and improvement. We have already observed that love, hope, gratitude, and joy, are all by nature allied to benevolence. In so far then as our indulgence tends to promote these affections, we co-operate with the designs of Providence, and lay a foundation for the amiable tempers, and dispositions which are essential to happiness. But when, by improper management, we counteract the wise designs of nature, stimulating the desire of gratification, until it becomes productive of the dissocial selfish passions that are allied to malevolence, we may assure ourselves that dispositions will thus be formed, which we shall

find it necessary to bend the force of our endeavours to eradicate. Now, is it not improvident, is it not unwise thus to create a necessity of counteracting ourselves, by teaching at one period of life, what we wish untaught at another !

In order that the benevolent affections should have room to operate, it is ordained by Providence, that the infant mind should be capable of receiving impressions of pleasure, from almost every object presented to the senses. While it is thus disposed to joy, it is easily inspired with gratitude to those by whom its joys are promoted ; and by the emphatic expressions of tenderness, which are naturally called forth by the innocence and helplessness of the infant state, the little heart is awakened to sympathetic affection. Thus love, joy, gratitude and complacency, naturally become inmates of the infant bosom, and would long maintain their peaceful reign, were they not disturbed by the turbulence of those selfish passions, which, whenever

the desire of gratifying them has been so far inflamed as to become a predominant habit of the mind, banish complacency, gratitude, and all their kindred emotions, and close every avenue to the heart.

Children, who from the circumstances of their birth or situation, are objects of particular attention, are apt to become wayward and self-willed, from the restraint they are laid under on account of the fears that are entertained for their personal safety. Instead of being permitted to exercise their ingenuity in providing amusement for themselves, they are vigilantly watched, and perpetually harassed by the admonitory lectures of some officious attendant, who, under the pretence of guarding them from danger, deprives them of every opportunity of enjoying the pleasures that would arise, from making discoveries concerning the nature of the objects by which they are surrounded. Nor is it the mind alone that suffers from our superabundant care, for by it the person also is frequently ex-

posed to danger. The child who is always watched, knows not how to make use of liberty, and runs the risk of his life every time he is left to his own discretion. It is the maid's business to preserve him from falling out of the window, or running into the fire, or the water, and the moment she remits her vigilance he is lost !

The children of the poor have, in this respect, a great advantage over the children of the rich. It is they alone who are in infancy permitted to feel and to enjoy the rich provision made by nature for their instruction, in its full extent. Accordingly, we shall find that the children of peasants of the lowest class, nay, even the children of gypsies, have, at three years of age, a greater stock of ideas, acquired from the examination of sensible objects, and are infinitely more capable of taking care of themselves, than children of the higher rank at six.

On a woody and steep declivity of the Cotteswold hills, where they project into

the vale of Gloucester, stands a small cot inhabited by a poor widow, or rather a deserted wife, who was left with two infants, for whose provision she exerted herself in the labours of the field; and being a woman of remarkable strength and dexterity, she found constant employment with the neighbouring farmers. As soon as her youngest boy was weaned, she consigned him to the care of his brother, not yet three years of age. After having cut the brown bread, which was to supply them with food for the day, and given necessary instructions to the elder boy, who was to act as cook, housekeeper, and nurse, she left them generally about five in the morning, and seldom returned till night. At the time I first saw this little pair (which I frequently did every day for weeks together, when on a visit to a family in the neighbourhood) the eldest was near five, and the youngest about two years of age. Each might have sat for the picture of an infant Hercules. By living almost con-



stantly in the open air, they had acquired a degree of hardiness and vigour, seldom to be met with at that early age; and by experience had become so well acquainted with the objects around them, and with the nature of every danger to which they were exposed, that though often on the edge of precipices, which would make a fine lady shudder with horror, and where a fine little master would most probably have broken his neck, I never heard of their meeting with the smallest accident or disaster. When the hours of meal arrived, the elder, who never for a moment forsook his little charge, took him into the cot, and seating him in a corner, proceeded to make a fire of sticks, which he managed with great dexterity. The brown bread was then crumbled down, boiled with water, and sweetened with a very little very coarse sugar. This plain, but from its effects evidently wholesome viand, he then placed on the floor, and sitting down betwixt it and his brother, gave him alter-

rate spoonful with himself, till all was finished.

"Take care, Dan," said a lady who once happened to step into the cottage at the beginning of this operation, "Take care, that you don't scald your brother's mouth."

"No fear o' that," returned the boy, "for Ise always takes un first to self."

From such examples as the above, we may learn what habits of caution and circumspection children acquire from experience; and though a total neglect of their personal safety would be highly culpable, it seems evident, that in our anxiety for their preservation, we often produce consequences equivalent to the neglect we deprecate. The constant attendance of domestics, however, is not only given with a view of securing their safety, but is considered as a mark of distinction due to their rank. It is then not in the affection of parents, but in their vanity, that this custom originates: and where people of fortune pique themselves upon selfishness and imbecility, it is very natural that they

should wish for their children the same species of distinction. With persons of this description it is in vain to argue. In their eyes, fortitude, magnanimity, and all the virtues that constitute a truly noble character, are of small estimation. Nor can it be expected that their children will ever value what they themselves despise. Let such as are capable of more rational and more exalted views, beware of defeating their nobler purposes, by the adoption of a mode of treatment which has a tendency to debase the future character, by associating ideas of glory with ought that is in its nature undignified and contemptible.

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## LETTER IX.

*Examination of the Associations which produce the desire of Distinction.—The Love of Glory how perverted.—Love of Dress.—Love of Admiration.—Exemplified.*

I HAVE already hinted at the tendency we have to sympathise with the possessors of wealth, in connecting with the idea of their persons the idea of all that swells their state. But it would be useful to the possession of wealth to reflect that the respect which this association produces, is not an impulse of benevolence; and that they who bow with most implicit deference to those with whom they now connect the ideas of greatness, would spurn them with contempt were that connection of ideas broken. Of this truth, many strik-

ing proofs have been furnished, during the period of the French Revolution. This is not, however, the place to enlarge on this species of argument. It is sufficient for our present purpose to show, that the love of wealth and power are principles, which, when permitted to run to excess, have a manifest tendency to subvert the morals and corrupt the heart. As far, therefore, as we by early association give activity to these principles, in so far are we instrumental to the depravity and corruption against which we profess it to be the great object of education to guard.

The same principle which leads us to contemplate with complacency, whatever is connected with the idea of superior rank; gives rise to our vehement admiration of whatever is called fashionable.

In this, as in every other strong expression of our feelings, children soon learn to sympathise. Fashionable and unfashionable are, in many instances, the only test of merit. By degrees the test is applied not

only to the modes of dress, and the forms of furniture, but to the conduct and actions. To be fashionable, implies a distinction of the highest order; and when this distinction is sought after, through the medium of vanity and folly, frivolity and dissipation, what is the result? Let us look around, and we shall be at no loss for an answer, *a melancholy answer!*

When the mind attaches every idea of felicity to this species of distinction, is it to be wondered, that in order to attain it, no sacrifice is deemed too great, no price too enormous? By means of this association have the boundaries between vice and virtue been swept away. Depravity no longer shrinks abashed from the presence of uncontaminated purity; nor does virtue turn indignant from the approach of vice, provided she have the stamp of fashion on her forehead.

How often, from this pernicious association, does the juvenile candidate for distinction assume the appearance of a degree

of depravity, at which his heart revolts! How often is he prompted by fashion to the commission of sins, for which he cannot plead the call of appetite, or the urgency of temptation! How often is he led to mistake the spirit of selfishness for manly independence, to smother the best affections of his heart as symptoms of weakness, and to assert opinions which his understanding condemns, because they are the opinions of those whom his perverted judgment has been taught to admire and to imitate!

By means of this association it happens, that so many in either sex have no conception of happiness independent of external circumstances. “ *They do not search for it in themselves, but in the eyes of the world.* All their enjoyments must be violent, sensual, or OSTENTATIOUS. Admire them, talk of them, flatter them; let the diurnal papers exhibit their names in capitals, and fashion crowd their door; let their equipages be splendid, and their man-

nion magnificent; their egress and regress recorded in the daily histories; or they sicken in the midst of health, they pine in the midst of abundance. To be *celebrated* even for folly, even for vice, is to them an enviable NOTORIETY; to be unnoticed in public circles, in the midst of every real blessing and solid comfort at home, infuses a bitter into all those sweets which GOD in his bounty has lavished.\*

And is this the object of a mother's ambition for the darling children of her bosom? Is it to this she would devote the offspring Heaven has entrusted to her care? Whatever she may assert to the contrary, let her reflect, that if, by the tenor of her conversation and conduct, she inspires a preference for the objects of a vain and puerile ambition, the association of ideas thus excited will inevitably lead to all the consequences above described. By mediocrity of fortune her children may indeed

\* Knox's Christian Philosophy, vol. ii.



be saved from publicity of folly; but the effect upon their virtue and their happiness will be exactly the same. Let her contrast the picture: let her behold her children rich in intellectual and moral worth, their desires regulated by virtue, their passions under the control of reason, and their hearts in possession of "that peace which passeth understanding." Let her see them ennobled by that species of superiority, which alone commands the reverence of the heart, and enjoying that true dignity, which confers the only real distinction. Let her imagine such children bestowing her tomb with the tears of filial gratitude; and even in the latest hour blessing her memory, as the cause of the happiness that had marked their path in life, and as the conductor to that **HOPE**, which sweetens the hour of dissolution.

How poor, in comparison of this, is the paltry ambition that is gratified by the envy, or even the admiration, of a few trifling and silly individuals! And yet, for the pur-

pose of exciting this envy, and of procuring this admiration, do people court the assistance of wealth and honours, and assiduously solicit acquaintance with those who are in the enjoyment of the perishable distinctions they bestow: by these means teaching their children to consider this as the first, the *only* object worthy the pursuit of rational and immortal beings.

When the desires of the heart have been thus perverted, it is by a miracle alone that they can be changed. The strength of that association which connects the idea of glory with the idea of notoriety, has not only been productive of all that is pre-eminent in folly, but of much atrociousness in vice. We may farther observe, that the same love of glory, which, when regulated by principle, and connected with ideas of duty towards GOD and man, gives birth to the noblest exertions, becomes, when excited by the selfish passions, the scourge of the human race. Hearts which were form-

ed for benevolence have, by the love of glory, been hardened to the corruption of deeds at which humanity revolts : by it have murder and devastation been made the insignia of honour ; and the widow's and orphan's tears, the precious pearls that form the hero's wreath.

Happily for mankind, the power of extensive mischief is in the hands of only a small number of individuals. But the field of slaughter is not the only field on which the love of glory is displayed. On the turf, at the gaming-table, nay, even on the highway, it often flourishes ; evincing that there is nothing mean or contemptible that may not become the object of glory to perverted ambition. In many instances it instigates to the seduction of innocence, and is frequently the chief incitement to adultery. It makes the coward brave the vengeance of the Almighty, and gives to infidelity more than half its votaries.

In the female mind we may trace the operation of the same sentiment, displayed in braving the censures of the world, or in the exhibition of new and striking absurdities; though it sometimes takes a bolder flight, and leads to a dereliction of every obvious duty; while it pursues fame in a devious and unbeaten path, which, alas! leads but to mortification, disappointment, and repentance!

“Ought, then, the love of praise to be eradicated from the human heart?” No. But it ought there to be associated with what is in itself praise-worthy.

“Not absolutely vain is *human* praise;  
When human is supported by *divine*.—  
Praise is the salt that seasons *right* to man,  
And whets his appetite for *moral* good.  
Thirst of applause is virtue's *second* guard,  
Reason her first; but reason wants an aid.  
Our private reason is a flatterer;  
Thirst of applause calls public judgment in,  
To poise our own, to keep an even scale,  
And give endanger'd virtue fairer play.”

Instead of an indiscriminate love of praise, we ought carefully to inspire our pupils with an ardent desire for the esteem and approbation of the worthy and discerning. We ought to impress them by our conduct with a sense of the veneration we feel for virtue and virtuous characters. And as soon as the light of reason begins to dawn, we ought to make them sensible, that the esteem of the wise is more estimable than the applause of the many. The *love of admiration* has, indeed, by some authors, been represented as the sole actuating principle that ought to govern the female mind. It has been held forth, not only as the parent of every female grace, but as the proper basis of every female virtue. Upon this pernicious principle has the education of females been too frequently conducted; and miserable have been the consequences which have ensued, and still ensue, from this grand source of female depravity and folly.

To admiration women are from infancy taught to attach ideas of glory; but that species of admiration, for the sake of which the voluptuary would degrade them beneath the rank of rational beings, cannot be the lot of all. It can only be bestowed on beauty; and never does beauty appear so truly fascinating, as when it seems unconscious of the claim. If your daughters abound in personal charms, they will be admired, though the love of admiration be not uppermost in their hearts; if they are destitute of beauty, the love of admiration will lead to disappointment and dismay. "May they not be admired for their accomplishments?" you will probably ask; "and will not the wish for this admiration operate as an incitement to the acquirement of the accomplishments for which they are taught to expect applause?" Instead of such excitation, I should consider it a wiser and a safer part to make them early sensible of the real value of that applause, which is much more frequently extorted

than sincere. By all the means in my power, I should endeavour to render the pleasure of pleasing those with whom they are connected by the ties of duty and affection, a powerful motive in their breasts. If this motive be sufficiently strong, it will have all the effect as a stimulus to exertion that the love of praise could possibly produce, while it will possess the inestimable advantage of preserving the mind from the contamination of vanity.

So sedulously would I guard against the introduction of this baneful passion, that I would not hesitate to dismiss every infant toy, which I thought could be the means of insinuating its poison. Did I think with Rousseau, that dolls were the means of inspiring a love of dress (one of the chief instruments of vanity), no doll should ever be permitted to enter my doors. But in my opinion, it is the use that is made of them, that can alone render dolls pernicious. In inspiring the love of dress, they may act as auxiliaries, but can never be

principals. Where the love of finery does not operate, dolls will soon be laid aside; and to prevent such an attachment to them as may be injurious, it is only necessary, that they should be dressed with the same simplicity as children. All the arguments which are employed by Rousseau, and by Lord Kames, who borrows his opinions on female education from Rousseau, in favour of dolls, would (did I agree with them) furnish me with the most incontestable proofs of their pernicious tendency.

“ The different instincts of the two sexes,” says Lord Kames, “ appear very early. A boy is continually in action; he loves a drum, a top, to ride upon a stick. A girl, wishing to be agreeable, is fond of ornaments that please the eye. *She begins with a doll, which she dresses and undresses, to try what ornaments will suit best. In due time the doll is laid aside, and the young woman’s own person becomes the object of her attention.*”

As to the specific difference betwixt the instincts of the two sexes, which his Lordship



and Rousseau take for granted, I confess I am somewhat sceptical. I believe any little girl in high health and good spirits would, if permitted to follow the bent of her own inclination, prefer beating the drum, or whipping the top with her brother, to dressing and undressing the finest doll in her possession. Here, as in many other instances, we find the inclinations, which we have inspired by means of early association, ascribed to original instinct.

Let us now attend to the tendency of the association which he describes as a *cause*, though it is in reality a *consequence*, of this "*dressing and undressing*," in order to try the effects of a variety of ornaments on the doll; it is becoming "*fond of ornaments that please the eye*," or in other words, the love of finery.

The passion for dress may be excused, or rather indeed applauded, in a being whose highest aim is to please, whose greatest virtue consists in being agreeable. But is it surprising that beings, educated

upon such principles, should be made the easy prey of insidious flattery ! Taught to approve themselves, neither by the laws of God nor conscience, but by the applause of a vain and foolish world, can we wonder that they should so often make a sacrifice of all that is honourable, and respectable, and estimable, in order to attract the admiration which is in their eyes the supreme good ?

If we wish that the virtue of our daughters should be of a more sterling stamp, not forged in the mint of vanity, but issuing from principle, we shall be persuaded of the necessity of guarding against those early associations, by which the love of admiration is produced.

Many are the females who might have soared to exalted excellence, but for the influence of this destructive passion for finery ; which, where it has been early and deeply rooted in the heart, is very seldom extirpated. Do we not daily see instances

of women, who are by no means deficient in understanding, or destitute of principle, devoting that time, and that attention, to the decoration of their persons, which under the direction of reason and piety, might be improved to the noblest purposes? Of what improvement is the mind susceptible, whose thoughts are incessantly occupied on a subject of such trifling import? In the midst of her most serious studies, a cap or a feather will break the chain of ideas, and effectually destroy their arrangement; so that the mind must become incapable of reasoning, or of pursuing the reasonings of others.

In women of moderate fortune, the importance attached to dress is particularly pernicious; as with them the love of variety cannot be gratified, but at such an expense of *time* and *thought*, as must frequently encroach upon every serious duty. A taste for books is sometimes, by superficial observers, objected to in women, as

interfering with the performance of their duties social and domestic; but I believe that in this class of society there is more time and trouble bestowed in alterations and realterations, in needless makings and modellings, than the greater lover of literature ever bestowed on the cultivation of her understanding. In minds thus occupied it is in vain that we look for strength of judgment, or even for elegance of taste, since these can only result from cultivation. A delicate sense of propriety, the soul of true taste, is not a necessary concomitant to the love of finery; for often do we see those, whose whole souls are engrossed by the love of dress, exposing themselves to ridicule by the incongruity of those very ornaments, on which they set the highest value.

The consequence of this inordinate passion for dress is not less fatal to the heart than to the understanding; for wherever the object of affection is nearly related to self, the selfish and dissocial passions must

inevitably be produced. The love of dress partakes, in this respect, with the nature of the selfish gratifications in general, which, as we have already seen, are all inimical to the benevolent affections; but it has a still greater tendency than any of the others to the production of envy.—While the desire of esteem and approbation enhances the benevolent and social affection, and gives rise to that virtuous emulation, which imparts energy and activity to the mind, the inordinate love of dress and admiration produces a jealous spirit of rivalry, which frequently leads to malevolence. Hence, that love of detraction, which is, alas! so very prevalent, as to be deemed an inherent and radical disease of our common nature; but which, wherever it prevails, may easily be traced to the pain of disappointed vanity thirsting for applause, and turning its hatred against the objects which obstruct its gratification. Envy is ever the daughter of personal vanity and mean ambition; but she is the mother of hatred,

malice, and malignity. Is it to be the prey of such passions, that we wish to inspire our daughters with an early love of admiration?

A thirst for power and glory are the stimulants of a man's ambition; but we take care, by means of early association, to render vanity the sole operating principle in the mind of a woman. It is for the gratification of vanity alone, that a female, educated on the principles of Rousseau and his followers, can desire riches or power; and the gratification of the same vanity must constitute her sole notions of glory. What conduct can we expect from such a being? When the tempest of passion assails, will the virtue that is founded on the quicksand of vanity be able to resist its force? The woman whose highest aim is to be agreeable, and whose chief expectation of becoming so is fixed, by early association, on personal decoration, will naturally give a preference to the society of fops and coxcombs, as it is from them her

taste in dress will be most likely to receive the flattering incense of applause. Eager to approve herself to men of this description, is it to be wondered at, that her opinions, her prejudices, should receive a tint from theirs? The fear of what the world will say (her only principle) will have little influence in deterring from crimes, of which the world may never know. What is, then, to save her from the seducer, to whom she finds herself more agreeable than to her husband? Alas, nothing! Of the shocking multitudes that have in these days sunk to depravity, where one has been the victim of passion, hundreds have fallen a prey to the corrupt and vicious principles, which render the voice of flattery the arbiter of conscience, and substitute the love of praise for the desire of esteem.

The mother who really wishes to secure the virtue of her daughters, will endeavour to render the desire of praise-worthiness a more powerful passion in their breasts than the desire of praise. But, in order to suc-

ceed in her endeavours, she must take care not to show a greater anxiety for their excelling in those accomplishments which are the objects of admiration, than in the virtues which are the proper objects of esteem.

If a human soul is too precious to give in exchange for the whole world, how should we answer the question, were we asked, "what it would profit our children, were they to gain applause, as the best dancers, or performers, or painters, the world ever produced, if they gave their souls in exchange for these accomplishments?" Let us therefore beware lest by impressing the minds of our children with a false notion of the supreme value of these accomplishments, and showing, by our anxiety on this point, that they are of more importance in our eyes than wisdom, or virtue, we endue them with a false and pernicious principle, which may corrupt their hearts, and influence the whole of their future conduct.



In these, as in all other instances, it is the important duty of the parent to reflect upon the tendency of her own conduct. The mother who would have her child superior to vanity, *must be superior to it herself*. The girl who attends her mother's toilet, and is a constant witness of her anxious solicitude concerning personal appearance, will learn to consider personal appearance as an object of the first importance. Should she even be employed, during the tedious and momentous operation, in reading the Bible to her mother, or in committing whole chapters of it to memory, little will such studies, undertaken at such a time, affect the previous association. In like manner, the young woman who constantly witnesses the anxious solicitude of her parents, concerning her acquirement of the ornamental branches of education, and observes with what comparative indifference they regard her moral improvement, will learn to consider admiration as the supreme good.

In having placed dress and accomplishments under the same head, I may perhaps offend the lovers of the arts. Candour will, however, perceive, that it is not the arts that are the objects of my censure, but the spirit in which they are often cultivated. By vanity they are reduced to a par with the frivory baubles which derive all their value from fashion. Far from wishing to degrade, I would exalt them to a more dignified situation, and render them instrumental to social happiness.

With regard to dress, far be it from me to recommend an ascetic contempt for the common modes of society. So insidious and deceitful are the worst of human passions, that pride generally contrives to lurk under the appearance of singularity. The affectation of it is, at least, always suspicious. It is not, therefore, by renouncing the ornaments which custom has rendered proper to her rank and station; nor is it by an *affectation* of plainness, nor is it by vehement declamations against

the sin of vanity, that a mother is to show herself superior to the love of finery ; but it is by evincing, in the whole tenor of her conduct and conversation, that dress is never considered by her as one of the material concerns of life. To give due weight to her maternal admonitions on this head, she must make it clearly evident, that while her regard for personal appearance is connected with her notions of propriety, personal decoration occupies *little* of her *time*, *less* of her thoughts, and *none* of her affections.

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## LETTER X.

*Wealth.—Rank.—Fashion.—How rendered Objects of Esteem, and Preference.—Consequences of these Associations.—Necessity of counteracting them.—Hints, and Observations.*

IT has, I trust, been fully proved, that if we consider it of any consequence to form the minds of our children to virtue, we must sedulously guard them from those associations which influence approbation, and disapprobation, and anxiously endeavour to give a moral direction to their desires and aversions.

Let us then examine how far we act in conformity with this doctrine.

You wish your child to admire and approve what is excellent and estimable, be-

believing that he will be apt to imitate what he thus admires and approves; you wish him to condemn meanness and to hate vice, believing that he will avoid, and spurn what he thus hates and contemns; and the method you take to impress these sentiments is, by telling him that virtue ought to be the object of our love, and vice the object of hatred. In so far you do well. Only take care, not immediately to contradict yourself. Do you wish to know how you can possibly give a direct contradiction to yourself, upon a subject of such importance? I beg to call your attention to the following, which you will find a case exactly in point.

“ We ought to love people who are good, and wise, and pious,” said an old lady to her little grandson; “ for you know, my dear, that GOD loves them, and that they will go to Heaven.”

“ And are Lady \*\*\*\*, and Lady \*\*\*\*, good, and wise, and pious, Grandmamma?”

And does GOD love them, and will they go to Heaven?"

"I do not know about their goodness, my dear, but they are very genteel people, and keep the best company, and we need not trouble ourselves about their goodness." "But I am sure Mrs. \*\*\*\* is very good, and very wise, and very pious, too, for I heard both Dr. \*\*\*\* and you say so t'other day; but you never ask her to fine dinners as you do Lady \*\*\*\*, and Lady \*\*\*\*; though now I remember she was asked next day *to eat up the fragments*, as my aunt Julia said. And do you remember, Grandmamma, how vexed you and aunt Julia were, when Sir John \*\*\*\* was let into such company? and aunt Julia, you know, went over beside Sir John, and never took any notice of Mrs. \*\*\*\* after he came in, nor spoke a word to her the whole evening, but seemed quite ashamed of her being there? Now, if she had told Sir John, that she was so wise and so good, and that

God loved her, would he not have loved her too?"

"You know, my dear," returns the fond grandmother, "that Sir John is a man of fashion, and people of his rank expect to meet only with people of style, you know, like themselves. And Mrs. \*\*\*\*\* has no great fortune, and keeps no carriage, and does not dress fashionably, so that one does not like to introduce her into company. But be you good and wise, my dear, and every body will love *you*."

While respect and esteem for goodness, wisdom, and piety, are thus professed in *words*, but manifestly contradicted by the whole tenor of our actions, the impression that will ultimately prevail is obvious. The more we examine this point, the more reason shall we have to be convinced, *that the education, which is not conducted upon consistent principles, never can be productive of any good.* It is in vain that we labour to reconcile the worship of GOD and Mammon. If we teach the first

by our lips, and the latter by our lives, we may assure ourselves, that the latter only will be taught effectually. Had the lady I have mentioned above studied consistency, her lesson to her grandson would have run as follows :

“ You see, my dear boy, the advantage of riches, which procure people respect and esteem ; therefore you must by all means strive to become rich. But riches alone are not sufficient, for very vulgar people may become rich ; but you must likewise be fashionable, and keep fashionable company, and learn to like what fashionable people like, and to do what fashionable people do ; and to hate every thing, and every person, that is vulgar and ungentle. You must always keep it in remembrance, that if you are a man of fashion, you will gain admittance into *the best company*, though you have no good quality to recommend you ; nay, though you are guilty of the most atrocious sins, provided they be the sins of a gentleman. For you see,



my dear, how my Lord \*\*\*\*, and Mr. \*\*\*\*, and Sir \*\*\*\*, are sought after, and respected, and caressed, by people of fashion ; though we all know, that they have been guilty of murder, and adultery, and seduction ; that they are tyrannical in their dispositions, unjust in their dealings, and equally capricious and foolish in every part of their conduct. But still they are *men of fashion*, and on that account are received into the best company. Make it, therefore, your endeavour, my dear, to be a man of fashion, and every body that is worth knowing will love you." Every word here said would have been so correspondent with the associations already formed, and perpetually reiterated, that the mind would not have been bewildered between two opposite principles of action. All would have been plain and consistent.

Is any fashionable mother shocked at the idea of repeating this lesson to her child *in words* ? Let her reflect, whether she may not every day have repeated it far

more forcibly by her conduct ; and let her remember that those associations, which lead to preference or contempt, are not the work of a few set lessons, but are formed by sympathy, imitation, and habit.

The pity they are taught to bestow upon the poor, seldom inspires children with benevolence ; because they are forced by early association to condemn poverty, and to consider it as a mark of inferiority ; a specific distinction, in considering which all idea of a common nature is lost.

“ What ! give away my money to nasty beggars ! ” was the answer made by a sprightly child, to the first friend from whose lips she had ever received a lesson on the duties of humanity. She spoke the language of the nursery ; but whether she spoke by rote, or felt the force of her own expressions, was not immediately to be discovered. By degrees, however, the whole heart was laid open, and it was then with pain perceived, that a deep-rooted antipathy to all the lower orders had been care-

fully implanted in her mind. It was with great difficulty she could be brought to believe, that the poor were not of a different species from the rich ; neither could she imagine them capable of the same feelings. But the little heart, though it had been thus shut up, was of excellent materials, and soon rewarded the anxious friend, by expanding with the glow of kindness and compassion, whenever the feelings were strongly excited by a tale of woe. Still the state of poverty was connected with ideas of meanness and contempt ; nor was this association broken, until repeated instances had been given of such highly meritorious conduct, in persons of lowly station, as excited a considerable degree of interest.

Little, however, would the lessons of the instructress have affected, if they had not been supported by the regular tenor of her actions. In speaking of the high or of the low, she took care to evince, that worth was the only object of her esteem, and

vice the certain object of aversion and contempt. She explained to her pupils, why in our exterior demeanour, a respect is properly shown to the difference of rank and station, and convinced them, that while the observance of these laws of courtesy is a duty which we owe to ourselves and to society, the exercise of kindness and beneficence is a duty of still higher origin and importance. Thus were the sympathies of their hearts imperceptibly turned into the current of virtue. The idea of GOD, as the common father of the good, was, it must be remarked, the most powerful agent in producing the change to which I have alluded.

By reminding children, when they address their prayers to "their Father which is in Heaven," that the children in the poor and lonely hut are at the same moment praying to GOD in the same words, and that the sovereign Lord of the universe hears the prayers of both with equal complacency, a new train of ideas is intro-

duced into the mind, and the first impressions of religion are connected with benevolence.

Very easy it is to sow the seeds of benevolence in the infant heart; but it is by no means so easy to root out the seeds which obstruct their growth; and of these the ardent desire of superiority, when stimulated by the vulgar objects of ambition, will be found most fertile and tenacious.

If, indeed, we have no other solicitude concerning our children than to see them rich; if we consider *wealth* and *happiness* as synonymous, and think worldly honours the first and greatest species of distinction; we cannot too early or too assiduously cultivate the love of riches in the infant mind. The dictates of integrity, the call of honour, and the voice of conscience, we ought, in this case, to teach them to despise; for often will they be found troublesome and detrimental. The forms of religion, and a prejudice in favour of some peculiar dogmas, we may indeed retain; but let us be-

ware of inculcating the spirit of the Gospel, for that will inevitably rise up in judgment to condemn us!

The respect paid to riches has been a theme of complaint with moralists of all ages. Even in the days of Homer,

“ Want was the scorn of ev’ry wealthy fool,  
And wit in rags was turn’d to ridicule.”

The son of Sirach, who, like Homer, drew his observations upon human nature not from books but men, has made many apposite remarks upon the same subject.

“ When a rich man falleth he hath many helpers; he speaketh things not to be spoken, *and yet men justify him*: the poor man slipped, and they rebuked him; he spake wisely, and could have no place. When a rich man speaketh, every man holdeth his tongue; and lo! what he saith they extol it to the clouds! If the poor man speaks, they say, what fellow is this?”—“ Gold hath been the ruin of many; it is a stumbling-block to every one that sacrificeth unto it, and every fool shall be taken there-

with. Blessed is the rich that is found without blemish, *and hath not gone after gold.* Who is he," the wise man emphatically asks, "who hath been tried thereby, and found perfect? then LET HIM GLORY!"

It was doubtless in consequence of observing the evil tendency of this association, that the Spartan legislator banished wealth from the republic. So long as the *spirit of his laws* continued to operate, Lacedæmon flourished. No sooner did poverty cease to be respected, than she sunk into contempt. The virtue of Athens, nay, even of Rome itself, will be found exactly proportionate to the degree in which this sentiment operated upon the minds of the people. No sooner did riches arrogate to itself that respect, which belongs to superior and intrinsic merit only, than all the patriotic virtues languished, and high-souled excellence bade a long adieu to man.

If we examine the basis of the virtues of Greece and Rome, in those eras of their

different republics most renowned for virtue, we shall find it dependent on sentiments, which it was reserved for the Gospel dispensation to perfect, and place in a superior light. The contempt for riches taught by Lycurgus did not tend to annihilate pride, or to check presumption, or to soften the heart towards the unfortunate; it only taught the passions to flow in another channel. The love of liberty, that ennobling energy of our nature, which, when under proper regulations (regulations taught by Christianity), is allied to the best affections of the human heart, was with them the source of pride, hatred, and cruelty. By our superior Lawgiver we are taught an indifference to riches, in common with all adventitious distinctions, that are unconnected with the virtues of the heart; and to place our affections upon those distinctions alone, which are in their natures inalienable, unalterable, and unperishable.



If we are not called upon to *renounce* wealth, we are surely restrained in its pursuit; for are we not expressly told, that "they who *trust in riches*, shall by no means enter into the kingdom of Heaven?" And yet were the inhabitant of another sphere to visit us, would he not imagine, that the Being we worship is a GOD who takes delight in wealth, and that we have received from him an assurance, that poverty alone renders us obnoxious to his displeasure?

To what source shall we trace the universal indifference to the Divine command? All the sensual enjoyments that wealth can purchase are in their nature limited; but the love of wealth is without bounds. Were it not connected with the idea of POWER, its influence would easily be kept within the pale of reason. It is to the love of power, then, that the love of wealth owes much of its influence on the human heart.

The love of power, as the term is generally applied, implies an inordinate desire for the gratification of self-will; but it likewise implies that subtle operation of the selfish principle which impels the mind to seek for opportunities of extending the idea of *self*, by connecting it with a multiplicity of objects. A great retinue of servants, numbers of fine equipages, expensive ornaments, &c. &c. afford us this species of gratification, and therefore become objects of desire to us. They would not, however, be connected in our minds with the idea of power, were we not, from our own experience, assured, that the bulk of mankind sympathised with our feelings. It is the consciousness of this sympathy that inflames our pride, and exaggerates our opinion of the importance we derive from adventitious circumstances. According to this statement, it is in the selfish principle that these desires originate, and to the selfish passions that they give rise.

In contemplating the opposite characteristics, which have distinguished some great nations in the different periods of their history, we must be struck with the operation of a general sentiment, which seems at certain eras to have pervaded the whole mass, tinging individual character with the colouring of the whole. At those eras when wealth and power were the exclusive objects of pursuit, we shall find, that vice and prosperity have been synonymous. The individuals, who obtained possession of the envied prize, have been celebrated for pride and arrogance; while the baser crowd, who hated their pride and condemned their insolence, have been converted by the same association into a race of servile tools and flatterers.

Gibbon has well contrasted the character of a state in this degenerate period, with that which it boasted before the introduction of luxury had rendered the love of wealth the ruling principle. "In the last moments of her decay," says the cele-

brated historian, "Constantinople was, doubtless, more opulent and populous than Athens at her most flourishing era, *when a scanty sum of six thousand talents, or twelve hundred thousand pounds sterling, was possessed by twenty-one thousand male citizens of an adult age.* But each of these citizens was a freeman, who dared to assert the liberty of his thoughts, words, and actions, whose person and property were guarded by equal law, and who exercised his independent vote in the government of the republic. Their number seems to be multiplied by the strong and various discriminations of character; but the subjects of the Byzantine empire, who assume and dishonour the names both of Greeks and Romans, present *a dead uniformity of abject vices*, which are neither softened by the weakness of humanity, nor animated by the vigour of memorable crimes."

Into this "dead uniformity of abject vices" must every nation sink, where the love of wealth and power pervades the

public mind, and becomes the general sentiment, the predominating principle. It is not the individuals alone, who possess wealth and power, that are contaminated by the love of these envied distinctions. Wherever an undue esteem for them prevails, the false associations, which must inevitably be produced, will tend to destroy all the distinctions of vice and virtue. When the merit or demerit of an action is judged of, not by its consequences in producing happiness or prosperity to society, but by the station and influence of the individual who performs it; when all the ideas of respect and esteem are intimately blended with ideas of rank and fortune, will not the feelings of the heart, and the reasonings of the understanding, be equally perverted?

Where shall we then seek for that noble independence of mind, which rests on conscious integrity, and which is the father of all the patriotic and manly virtues? If in the generous breast of any individual

it may still be found, its influence will have no effect, for it will cease to be respected.

Ah! that the generous spirit of Britons may be roused to avert this dire calamity, which, in the soft lap of luxury, is now approaching to destroy us! In no way can it be so effectually averted, as by imbuing the minds of the rising generation with such a love of knowledge and of virtue, founded on the firm basis of religious principle, as may preserve them from forming false and erroneous ideas concerning the chief good. They will then give to all, what justice and good sense require; "tribute to whom tribute is due, honour to whom honour;" but their love and their hatred, the passions and affections of their souls, will be placed on proper and adequate objects. Their contempt and detestation will be reserved for vice and folly, their admiration and esteem for pre-eminence in goodness, knowledge, and virtue,

It must be obvious to every observer, that the influence of power and wealth over the affections, is, in many instances, inimical to the happiness, as well as to the virtue, of individuals. It is this prevailing sentiment which renders people, whom fortune has placed in the middling ranks of society, ashamed of their station; and this false shame prompts them to live in such a manner, as may induce a belief of their opulence at the expense of their independence. What must be the consequence to their unfortunate children? Accustomed to consider honour and esteem attached to luxury, and to connect the ideas of penury with disgrace, how bitter must to them be that poverty, in which, by the folly of their parents, they must be inevitably involved! \*

\* How many of the children, of professional men in particular, may, on the death of their parents, when they experience the sad reverse of fortune, exclaim with Jaffier—

Never was there a period, when the circumstance I have above alluded to, called for more serious consideration than at the present moment. Never till now, since Britain first rose to distinction among nations, were the middling classes of her children held in contempt. But where is now that middling class, which used to be considered the glory and the strength of the empire? Should one not imagine it to be extinct; and that *genteel* and *ungenteel* formed the sole known distinctions in society? Even those, whose virtues and talents would have done honour to the soil in which they sprang, have caught the contagion, and instead of resting their claim to respect on their inherent merit, have

“ There’s not a wretch that lives on *common charity*,  
 But’s happier than I. For I have known  
 The luscious sweets of plenty ! Ev’ry night  
 Have slept with soft content about my head,  
 And never wak’d but to a joyful morning.  
 Yet now must fall like a full ear of corn,  
 Whose blossom scop’d, yet’s wither’d in the rip’ning.”



seemed to value themselves only in proportion to the rank of those, by whom they were noticed or admired.

I am well aware of the obloquy, to which I may expose myself by standing forth the champion of that unfashionable virtue, which, by being connected with an independent spirit, has been brought into disgrace, as savouring of republicanism; but while the test I have proposed is for me, it is of little consequence to me who shall be against me.

Of those crimes, to which the pursuit of wealth and power so frequently leads, I forbear to speak; they are so obvious and so well known, that every parent, who has the least degree of principle, will naturally endeavour to guard his child against them. But it may be questioned, whether these endeavours are always so directed as to ensure success. If children have been taught to associate every idea of felicity with grandeur, every idea of respect and admiration with worldly honours and prefer-

ment, is it to be supposed, that by a few lessons on the danger of avarice and ambition, these associations will be counteracted? Constant witnesses of our solicitude to appear members of the world of fashion, of our incessant pains to make acquaintance with the rich and great, while we despise or neglect the *good*; can we imagine, that riches and grandeur will not become the predominant desire of their hearts? With this desire the principles of worldly honour may indeed be made to quadrate; but let us remember, that with it the principles of religion and of sound sterling virtue must be eternally at variance.

We are taught to look upon the present period as an awful and portentous crisis, big with alarm to the rising generation. In one respect it certainly is so. The increasing prevalence of luxury, must inevitably expose great numbers in the rising generation to all the evils resulting from luxurious habits and dependent fortunes. The unhappy consequences must be fore-

seen by every thinking mind, and deprecated by every generous soul, abhorrent at the ideas of vice and slavery.

Were children taught by the conduct of their parents, as well as by the lessons of their preceptors, to estimate the advantages of wealth and power at *their proper value*; were the virtues of frugality, temperance, and economy, once more recalled from their long and hopeless banishment, to some degree of respect and estimation; and were that approbation and esteem, which are now bestowed on greatness, once more to become the meed of merit; have we not reason to expect, that this *portentous crisis* would terminate in an increase of national prosperity?

Let every mother, who has a sufficient degree of patriotism and of parental tenderness, to feel a glow of heart in the contemplation of such a picture, consider herself an instrument in the hand of Providence to contribute to its realization. Let her reflect, how much the proper education

of one single family may eventually contribute towards it; and that while the fruits of her labours are a rich harvest of peace, happiness, and virtue, which may descend through generations yet unborn, she will herself enjoy a glorious and eternal reward.

It is because they are hopeless of being able to stem the torrent by individual exertion, that individuals permit themselves to be carried down the stream; for I am persuaded, that were all the joys of ambition, luxury, and dissipation, to be pursued by those alone who find pleasure in them, the number of their votaries would soon be considerably diminished. We are far more solicitous to *appear* happy, than to be really so; and to this *appearance* of happiness the reality is often sacrificed. Health, peace, and competence, are essential to human felicity; yet health, and peace, and competence, are despised as vulgar blessings, of which we make a willing offering at the shrine of fashion.

Our children feel the effects of our prejudices, and suffer from them even in their infant state; for how often is the health and comfort of the little innocents sacrificed to the mother's vanity? When the dress of infants is at war with common sense, it is lamentable to observe how seldom the latter proves victorious; nay, how seldom permitted to suggest an alteration in the decrees of the former, which must be slavishly adhered to, though loss of sight, by exposing the eyes to the fierce rays of a burning sun, or loss of limbs, by the tightness of ligatures, should be the consequence. How seldom, even in the toys provided for their amusement, is the advantage of the children consulted? It may be answered, that children love what is gaudy, and that by giving them fine toys we gratify this natural propensity. But would we extend our observation a little further, we should be convinced, that children are rather *attracted* than *gratified* by the sight of gay and brilliant objects, which

soon lose the power of pleasing, unless they lead to the gratification of curiosity. After this gratification the little heart incessantly pants. But, alas! fine toys are not intended for this purpose. It is very naughty to break them; and why? Because, forsooth, they have cost a great deal of money at the toy-shop! I remember having been told, when very young, that

“ The children of Holland found pleasure in making  
What the children of England found pleasure in  
breaking.”

And that it then forcibly struck me, that I should have had more pleasure in making and painting the little coach, which I had drawn to pieces in half an hour, than I had experienced in demolishing it.

Why not gratify this natural propensity, by giving children toys on which they may exercise their ingenuity?

Often have I amused myself with observing a little group employed in erecting the tiny fabric of turf or pebbles. With what activity

do they collect the materials, while fancy and judgment are equally employed in the selection. Animation and intelligence play upon the countenance of the ingenious contrivers while hope quickens exertion, and novelty gives a zest to pleasure.

While the powers of the mind are thus called forth, how many new ideas may it not receive? By the assistance of a few well-timed observations from a judicious mother, the building of the rush-covered edifice may be the means of laying the foundation of a just and elegant state.

Let us now turn to the toy-strewed nursery, and observe the neglected baby-house, with its store of Lilliputian furniture, the admiration of an hour ; but which, having never produced any emotion but that of short-lived wonder, is soon viewed with indifference ; nor is ever resorted to as an object of delight, except when infant vanity can be gratified by exhibiting it to a stranger. Then, indeed, when the ever-welcome incense of flattery has been poured on the costly toy, it does not fail to

rise in the estimation of the owner, till it produces all the pride of property; a species of pride which all detest in others, and which is the never-failing mark of a narrow and sordid mind; but which is yet carefully instilled into children by the thoughtless vanity of parents.

Where a number of young people are brought up together, a tenaciousness, with regard to property, is frequently inspired and encouraged with a view of teaching children to be careful and prudent. Of such an early tenaciousness concerning property, selfishness and avarice are, however, a much more probable result. Instead of teaching children to defend the little articles of property they are taught to call their own, with all the selfish pertinacity of so many petty-fogging attorneys, would it not be better to make them sensible, that all property is a species of trust; that the only happiness conferred by its possession is, by giving opportunities for the exercise of benevolence; and that extreme selfishness with regard to property partakes



of the nature of injustice? " You know, my dears," would a prudent mother say to her children, " that this house, and all that it contains, is mine. I hire servants to take care of the furniture, and am at pains to instruct them in doing it properly ; but you know it is not for myself that I take this care. I consider all that is mine as entrusted to me for your advantage. It is you who enjoy all the benefit. Whatever I give to any of you, I expect you to take care of in the same way for the good of the rest. When you say *my top*, and *my doll*, remember that the top and the doll are only entrusted to your care, that you may, by preserving them, have it in your power to contribute to the amusement of your brothers and sisters." In families thus instructed, there would be none of those hateful wranglings, by which the benevolence of the youthful mind is so often destroyed. Instead of the frequent recurrence of " that's *mine*, and you shan't touch it," we should hear children saying to each other, " that is mine, and therefore you are welcome to it." It is

in this manner only that we can counteract the pernicious tendency of the unjust or ungenerous associations attached to MINE and THINE,—“ those cold words,” as St. Chrysostom calls them, “ which extinguish in our hearts the fire of charity, and light up that of covetousness.”

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## LETTER XI.

*Origin of the Love of Wealth.—Passions connected with it.—These Passions destructive of Benevolence.—Method of counteracting them.—Love of Power examined.—Its Consequences.—Association productive of Pride, and Arrogance.—How produced.—How counteracted.*

It is observed by the enlightened author of the Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, that of the difference of opinion, which exists concerning the comparative value of the various objects of pursuit, “ much no doubt is to be ascribed  
“ to a diversity of constitution, which renders a particular employment of the intellectual or actual powers agreeable to  
“ one man, which is not equally so to an-

“ other. But much,” he adds, “ is likewise  
 “ to be ascribed to the effects of association ;  
 “ which, prior to any experience of human  
 “ life, connects pleasing ideas and pleasing  
 “ feelings with different objects, in the minds  
 “ of different persons.”

Whoever has observed the powerful operation of sympathy on the minds of children, will readily admit that it is from sympathy that most of these casual associations have been received. It is surprising with what avidity the little creatures catch the tone of our sentiments, not only to imitate us in our expressions of them, but actually to imbibe and sympathize in them. They thus, even in infancy, attach the idea of *good* to whatever appears to be the object of our regard, and the idea of *evil* with what they observe to be the object of our aversion.

Of the various objects, with which children are surrounded, those would naturally appear the most valuable which were the most useful, or which contributed in the

greatest degree to their amusement. Nor is it easy to make children, who have been brought up with simplicity, comprehend why a thing of little or no use is to be valued on account of what it cost. This adventitious value is, however, learned by sympathy with our feelings. Children see such things esteemed by those around them, and readily pique themselves upon the possession of that which they are told is beyond the purchase of the vulgar; and thus, at a period of life when a field-flower or a mountain-daisy would appear more valuable than a diamond to unsophisticated nature, they learn an undue estimation for whatever distinguishes that rank, which they behold the universal object of deference and respect.

Thus, by means of agreeable impressions associated with the idea of wealth, wealth becomes the object of desire, long before any distinct notions are formed of the enjoyments it enables us to purchase. The impressions may be counteracted; but it

may likewise, in the course of events, be confirmed ; and should it be so strengthened as to become a ruling principle, it will infallibly give birth to a train of mean and sordid passions, rendering the character either odious or contemptible.

All the passions connected with the desire of wealth are of the selfish class ; but though equally injurious to the mind that harbours them, they become more or less obnoxious to society, as they are more or less active. For the sordid miser we only feel contempt, but are fired with indignation at the villany of the dishonest knave, though in reality, it is one and the same principle by which they both are influenced. A principle which, in both instances, may often be traced to early association.

Ought we then to prepossess the minds of our children with contempt and aversion for whatever is connected with the idea of wealth and power ? By no means. We may indeed observe, that the love of wealth, when the means of gratifying it

are withheld, seldom fails to produce this species of aversion; and that a rancorous antipathy to the possessors of affluence is the frequent companion of envy and discontent in mean and sordid hearts. Persons who are under the dominion of this illiberal prejudice distort the simplest actions into matter of offence, and attribute pride or malignity as the ruling motive of all who move in a sphere of life above their own.

To prejudices of this kind, persons of vulgar and confined education are always liable; but they are not peculiar to the vulgar. In the pride of the human heart there is a natural tendency to circumscribe all notions of worth, to the objects with which the idea of *self* can be some way or other connected. Hence, those false and uncharitable notions, which people who live in retirement are so apt to form of those who are compelled, by inclination or circumstances, to adopt a different mode of life. Hence, we are more inclined to

point out the errors and follies of those of superior stations, than to look to that class for instances of very, superior merit. Illustrious instances of this kind of superiority, even in the most exalted stations, are happily not rare among us; and ought to be adduced as proofs of the happy consequence of an early and steady preference for wisdom and virtue. Had such characters been taught to consider wealth and power as the *chief good*, they would have rested satisfied with the distinction conferred by rank and riches, nor aimed at meriting the approbation of GOD, and the esteem of their fellow-creatures.

The bad consequences attendant upon associating the idea of *supreme good* with *rank* or *riches*, are confined to no station. By means of this pernicious association, the heart of the mechanic may be as much perverted as the heart of the prince. The only difference is, that the child who is born to affluence and grandeur, and taught to consider these as the most desirable of



all distinctions, will endeavour to realize the ideas of happiness associated with them by pride and vain-glory ; and as the self-complacency that is generated by any thing but conscious merit, destroys the energies of virtue, it is not to be expected, that a being taught to value itself on adventitious circumstances, will ever be conspicuous for worth or wisdom. Elated by the early conceived ideas of his own importance, and more anxious to maintain the dignity of his *rank* than of his *nature*, his pride will not preserve him from becoming the slave of brutal appetite ; nor will it save him from the meanness of deceit, or the turpitude of treachery and revenge. Having been taught to rest his claims of superiority on circumstances foreign to every idea of moral worth, he will never associate any idea of respect with moral excellence. The approbation he gives to virtue will be cold and lifeless ; nor will his disapprobation of vice ever rise into aversion. Experience verifies the

truth of these remarks. A well principled mind can hardly be induced to credit how very difficult it sometimes is, to make persons of high rank sensible of what is truly estimable in character. So far from weighing the merits of individuals in the scales of truth and justice, they appreciate them by the ever-varying standard of caprice, and applaud or condemn as suits the humour of the present moment. If that humour be governed by pride, vanity, or selfishness, it is only those who sooth or gratify those passions that have any chance of being approved. Hence it is, that persons of rank are so often made the prey of wicked and designing persons. Were those who are born to fill elevated situations in society, impressed as they ought to be, in early infancy, with respect for wisdom and virtue, independent of all external circumstances, the effect of these impressions would be alike propitious to the advancement of their fame, and the preservation of their fortunes.

There is perhaps, none of the desires of our nature that sooner displays itself than the desire of power. From childhood to old age it exerts its influence in the human breast, and imperceptibly mingles with all our other desires, and is the primary root of most of our aversions. To give a proper direction to such an active principle, appears to be a matter of infinite importance. It is, in truth, not only of importance with regard to those who are born to the exercise of authority, but of importance to the future happiness of every human being.

When children are permitted to exercise their power to the detriment of any creature, they connect the desire of power with the idea of inflicting misery or mortifications upon others. The seeds of a tyrannical temper are thus sown in the infant heart. The delight which children take in tormenting animals, proceeds entirely from the love of power; but the same principle which, where no pains are taken to give it a proper direction, leads

to this exercise of cruelty, would, if properly regulated, give rise to the beneficent desire of cherishing and protecting those objects to whom its power extends. Nor is it on brutes alone that children learn to exercise the love of a power, in such a manner as gives a fatal direction to this ever-active principle. How soon they learn to exert it upon servants, all must have observed. It has always seemed astonishing to me, how persons who are themselves free of every tincture of pride or tyranny, can indulge their children in the exercise of those tempers. But the fact too often occurs to admit of dispute. In some families children are never dressed nor undressed without a struggle, occasioned by an attempt at exercising power on the part of the children, which is in general so far successful, as to gratify them by the consciousness of having encroached on the time, and insulted the patience, of their attendants. Here, again, the pleasure arising from the exercise of power is con-

nected with malevolence. The parent who sees and deprecates the consequence of this association, will never permit a child to keep a servant a moment longer in waiting than is absolutely necessary, and will be at pains to convince her children, how much pleasure they may derive from exerting their power in diminishing the trouble, and adding to the comforts of their attendants.

The desire of power may by those means be connected with the desire of esteem, a principle which we ought assiduously to cultivate; and here we have only to guard against introducing opposing principles in order to ensure success. Unfortunately, however, we do not consider the expressions of esteem a sufficiently strong incitement, unless heightened by admiration. The desire of esteem is thus rendered productive of vanity and affectation.

The power of contributing to the happiness of others, is, in a greater or less degree, given to all. Children ought to be

made early sensible of this: they ought to be taught an habitual respect for the feelings of others; and made to consider themselves as humble instruments in the hands of Providence for promoting the felicity of all around them. Let the spirit of benevolence be thus inspired, and in due time it will bring forth all its precious fruits. The attention to the feelings of others, which I would here recommend, is very different from that sentimental sensibility, which is a fashionable substitute for true benevolence. The former is totally inconsistent with that vanity and selfishness on which the latter is often founded. The one is the mere shadow of virtue, the other is its substance.

Children can no farther enter into the feelings they have never experienced, than by accommodating the tone of their behaviour to the outward symptoms of these feelings, which they will be led to do by the sympathies of unsophisticated nature. These sympathies ought to be attended to

and encouraged, but the *appearance* of them ought never to be insisted on. Instead of teaching children that they ought to *appear* sorrowful when they behold any person in pain, they ought to learn alacrity in serving and relieving them. These attentions will awaken sympathy by awakening attention. When they see a person in grief, it may be proper to explain to them the impropriety of appearing gay and joyous before the person who is unhappy; though at the same time I would be very careful to watch over, and reprehend, any affectation of a sensibility that was foreign to the heart. In this species of affectation children are very apt to be encouraged by the ill-judging partiality of parents; which is ever willing to construe the expressions of sympathy into the reality. Often have I seen a child get credit for the whining tone in which it pronounced the words *very sorry*; words to which the listless eye and unaltered countenance gave the lie

direct. To this counterfeit sensibility, I confess, I would give no quarter.

To let a child in any instance imagine that its little artifices escape detection, is laying a foundation for deceit and affectation. Such propensities, instead of being encouraged by an appearance of success, ought to be stifled in their birth, which they will easily be, by the disgrace consequent on detection; and to this disgrace every departure from sincerity ought invariably to be subjected.

Of all the selfish or malignant passions, none is more generally abhorred than pride. But, alas! how often, in reprobating it, do we make a partial reservation of that species of pride, to which early association has inclined our hearts. The pride of wealth appears hateful to those who boast more gentility than riches; while, by the purse-proud son of fortune, the pride of family is considered ridiculous. The unlettered observe the pride of learning with disgust; while the pride of ignorance is, by the



scholar, deemed unpardonable folly and presumption. The devotee, who renounces the pomps and vanities of the world, inveighs with equal zeal against the pride of all ranks and descriptions of his fellow-mortals; but whether this zeal may not be sometimes tinged with the pride he deprecates, is a question which charity forbids us to discuss.

Fully aware of the difficulty of disengaging the heart from all objects of false preference, so as to leave the judgment quite unbiassed, I have, in considering the question before us, carefully avoided trusting to its decision. The guide I have followed has been **THE PRECEPTS OF THE GOSPEL**; for in these I have found a compendium of all that the most enlightened philosophy ever advanced—of all that the soundest wisdom has inculcated! The precepts of the Gospel I often find at variance with the precepts, and still oftener with the practices, which prevail in polished society; but they are never at variance with them-

selves. They all manifestly tend to what I consider the perfection of the moral character—love towards GOD, and pure benevolence towards all our fellow-creatures. They teach, that these ennobling affections of the human soul cannot subsist with the selfish and dissocial passions. *Pride*, as the most potent, as well as most insidious, of the selfish and dissocial passions, they therefore condemn in all its branches. Nor is it the moral character alone which gains by the subjugation of this powerful passion, since whatever tends to corrupt the heart has a fatal influence upon the judgment.

That every species of pride is really adverse to the cultivation, not only of the benevolent affections, but even of the mental faculties, observation will convince us. Family pride, which arises from associating an idea of inherent superiority with the idea of the family from which we sprung, leads (it is by some asserted) to generosity of sentiment and dignity of conduct. But does experience confirm the truth of this

assertion? As far as mine extends, I confess it goes to establish the contrary. Like every other false sentiment founded on the basis of prejudice, it misleads the judgment, and corrupts the heart. In proportion as the mind arrogates to itself a superiority on account of extrinsic circumstances, it will generally be found destitute of real merit. What a man chiefly prizes in himself, he will chiefly esteem in others; and as illustrious descent is not always attended by illustrious virtue, the associations of esteem and preference may thus be connected with the extreme of vice and folly. Where family pride predominates, I have too often seen worth and wisdom treated with contempt, and characters decidedly eminent for talents and virtues forced to endure the proud contumely of imbecility and ignorance. In such instances, it is not outraging probability to suppose, that the *scorners* might have risen to a level with the *scorned*, but for that early-imbibed notion of their own superiority, on which they indolently

rested their claim to respect, and which, therefore, prevented them from pursuing the higher path to esteem, trodden by those whom pride taught them to consider their inferiors.

In countries where pride is more abundant than riches, the mental mischief that is done by this deep-rooted prejudice, is perhaps less fatal to the representatives of ancient families, than to the collateral branches. A liberal education, if it does not conquer the prejudice here spoken of, will, by presenting new associations, counteract its pernicious tendency; while an opportunity of enlarging the sphere of observation, by mixing with the inhabitants of other countries, must subdue its offensive arrogance. But to the poorer branches of great families, no such sources of improvement are open. Self satisfied with the inherent superiority to which they have been taught to imagine themselves born, they seek no other distinction; or, if ambition add its stimulus, it is not the ambi-

tion of meriting esteem, but the ambition of wealth and glory. Where this species of pride has become a national sentiment, its operation is not confined to the few noble families who can trace their lineage to a remote period. We shall sometimes find people, whose genealogical table contains not three generations, assuming as much pride and arrogance on account of their *family*, as if they had sprung from the Guelphs or Gibbelines. Women, as their education is more confined, and their society more contracted than men, may be observed to retain this sentiment in greater force. In what force it is sometimes by them retained, might afford matter of amusement to one inclined to laugh at human folly; but when we behold it palsy-  
 ing the hand of virtuous industry, destroying those energies of the mind that lead to the acquirement of moral and intellectual accomplishments, while it fosters the meanness of envy, and the superciliousness of disdain, we must seriously deplore

it as a prejudice detrimental to the happiness and improvement of society.

While we explain to our children the advantages of education, let us beware of engendering pride on account of these advantages. The pride of superior knowledge is seldom the companion of superior abilities. It is indeed altogether incompatible with that soundness of judgment which appreciates things according to their real value. In the judgment of a Christian, moral worth must, for obvious reasons, outweigh all other considerations: every association, therefore, which tends to produce pride on account of any attainment in knowledge, ought to be vigilantly guarded against. But were this caution to be attended to, what would become of most of the modern systems of education? What would become of all those arts which have been invented to give children such a smattering of knowledge, as may inflame their vanity, while the understanding is left in darkness? True humility, as well as

true dignity of mind, is only to be found with the thoroughly enlightened; but pride and arrogance are the inseparable attendants on superficial acquirements. In our anxious solicitude to give our children the appearance of attainment in knowledge, at an age when nature intended that the foundation of knowledge should be deeply laid, we make them skim the surface of science, using vanity as a stimulant to the unnatural exertion. The pride we take in their *seeming* progress is but too easily communicated to the infant mind. The pride thus acquired is aggravated by the ideas of self-importance, which a child, who finds its little attainments objects of interest to a whole family, cannot fail to entertain; and must be not a little increased by the methods employed to facilitate its initiation into the rudiments of learning. For this purpose it knows invention to be taxed, and sums to be lavished. With conscious pride it views the expensive apparatus, which is to save it

the trouble of industry and application, and naturally conceives that amusement and the gratification of vanity are the prime objects in the education of a *gentleman*.

To examine the depth of the knowledge acquired by such means, belongs to the second part of this work. It is sufficient at present to point out the bad consequences of any mode of education that necessarily engenders pride and vanity.

It has been lamented by some sensible writers upon education, that of the number of books professedly written for children, there should be so few which can be safely recommended to their perusal. The fear of perverting the judgment at that early period, by erroneous or incomprehensible statements of facts or circumstances, has, in my opinion, been somewhat overrated; but the danger of inflaming the imagination, and kindling the passions, by a detail of fictitious wonders, or false and strained representations of sup-



posed events, is deserving of our serious attention. It is not the moral of the tale alone to which a discriminating mother will attend: she will carefully observe its tendency, well knowing that the tendency may be pernicious, even where the moral is unexceptionable. On the minds of children the moral makes but a slight impression; but by the passions which it excites, by the train of ideas it associates, the tendency of every book may be determined.

The agency of supernatural beings, such as Fairies and Genii, is not seriously believed in by the child who takes most delight in perusing the extravagant compositions in which these fanciful agents are introduced; but the impression left upon the mind may nevertheless be sufficiently powerful, to expose it to the influence of superstition in after-life. An early taste for the wonderful naturally disposes the mind to credulity; and by credulity the taste for the wonderful is gratified at so cheap a rate, that the person who has che-

rished it turns with disgust from the sound reasoning that would enforce conviction. How many of the epidemic follies, which have at different periods appeared to infect the human race, might a philosophic observer trace to this prolific source !

If the stories of giants and enchanters, of Fairies and Genii, produce a tendency to superstition, by the powerful impression they leave upon the fancy, we ought to rejoice in their expulsion from the juvenile library ; but let us examine what has there supplied their place. A swarm of Lilliputian novels, pretty stories of pretty masters and misses, who ride in pretty coaches, and are rewarded by fine clothes and charming sweetmeats for their good behaviour : and what impression do we suppose these circumstances are calculated to make upon the infant mind ? A vague idea of the happiness attendant upon riches and honours ; a desire of distinction engendered by false notions of glory ; and false expectations concerning the rewards of vice and virtue.

Should the impression be too faint, to give strength and permanence to the pernicious associations thus produced, there is still another bad consequence attendant upon these pretty fictions, that is worthy of our consideration. In proportion as they give an unnecessary stimulus to imagination, they retard the progress of the other faculties of the mind; and while they create an insatiable thirst for novelty, they produce a habit of *indolent reverie*, which destroys the active powers, by preventing their exertion. I have known children of uncommonly dull capacities, and who seemed very deficient in imagination, who yet took great delight in these fictions, especially where the events were new and marvellous; but I never could observe, that any of the faculties were in the least degree improved by their perusal; so far the reverse, that I have generally found the dislike to application increased, and the capability of attention destroyed, after a free indulgence in these visionary tales.

Where the passions of wonder, terror, and surprise, are frequently excited by descriptions of the marvellous, such a tendency to these passions may be generated as shall render the mind prone to superstition and credulity; and though the impression made by fictions less improbable and absurd may be more slight and transient, they may, nevertheless, by means of false associations, sow the seeds of pride, ambition, and vain glory, in the infant heart. Rather, however, would I permit a child to peruse the most foolish story-book that ever the wildest fancy formed, and trust to my own endeavours for counteracting its tendency, either by reason or ridicule, than hazard the consequences of betraying my anxiety in such a manner as must inevitably excite curiosity and suspicion. I honour the principle from which this tender solicitude to guard every avenue to error certainly springs; but at the same time must freely confess my apprehension, that the evil consequences which

may arise from leading a child to consider itself in the light of an extraordinary being, for whom the best books that ever were written for children are not sufficiently wise or good, may be of a more serious nature, than any of those against which they so sedulously guard.

“ The moon shines at night when the sun is gone to bed,” is an expression in one of Mrs. Barbauld’s excellent little books for children, and objected to by Miss Edgeworth, on account of the erroneous opinion it conveys. With all due deference to an authority so respectable, I much question, whether the idea excited by the expression above-quoted can make more than a momentary impression on the most juvenile pupil ; while the false opinions, that may be formed of the tutor’s motive for obliterating the reprobated line, will probably give birth to pride and suspicion, passions that are neither transient nor innoxious. To preserve the tender mind from false and erroneous notions upon every subject, appears at first sight to be very de-

sirable; but to do so effectually, we must shut up the organs of sense; for by the impressions made upon these, thousands of erroneous notions are received, at a period when the judgment is immatured by experience, and the mind incapable of reflection. But as these impressions are slight, the associations formed by their means are transient, and may therefore be easily changed.

We may obliterate lines, and cut out whole pages, of the books we put into our childrens' hands in the manner recommended by Miss Edgeworth, and yet find it impossible to prevent the misconceptions of infant inexperience, for these will often attach false ideas to a word or sentence, which appears to us clear and intelligible. Our pains, in this respect, may be therefore thrown away, while the bad consequences may operate upon the mind for ever.

Where whole pages of a book are improper for a child's perusal, the book ought to be entirely withheld; and where we observe words or sentences liable to miscon-

struction in a book we think otherwise unexceptionable, would it not be better to mark them with a pencil, so as afterwards to examine the child upon them, in order to correct any erroneous opinion they may have conveyed, than to leave him to fill the chasm by conjecture? By thus pointing out the errors into which his unassisted judgment is liable to fall, we shall promote that teachableness of disposition so essential to the success of the tutor, and repel that early vanity, which, however powerful a weapon it may be found in the hands of the teacher, we cannot but consider as injurious to the pupil's mind. The possibility of converting vanity into pride, cannot, upon our principles, be admitted as an apology for encouraging the former; since to the system of morals we have adopted as our guide, they are equally repugnant and equally offensive. By the love of power, which originates in pride, the happiness and virtue of the world have been as often and as greatly injured as by

the love of false glory, which has its source in vanity. Nor have we any reason to apprehend, that by repressing these passions we shall in any measure destroy the vigour, or damp the energy of the mind; since it can be proved by many examples, that the desire of esteem is a no less powerful stimulus than the love of praise; and that the complacency which arises from conscious desert is more gratifying to the heart than all the joys of pride or ambition.

This species of self-complacency, our pupils ought early to learn how to distinguish from that pride which proceeds from an erroneous opinion of our own merit. The one is frequently found in union with humility: the other is accompanied by arrogance. Complacency is produced by the approbation of esteem: vanity, by the flattery of admiration. The good behaviour of children ought, therefore, to be approved, but never too highly praised. The indications of approbation are, indeed, so easily understood, even at a very early



age, that a prudent mother will find no occasion for a lavish use of the stimulus of praise. Should it even prove otherwise, of which I have little apprehensions, I should rather that my child was to continue dull, than to become vain-glorious. If, laying aside our partiality, we permit ourselves to observe the natural dispositions of children with attention, we shall be convinced, that where the animal spirits have not been checked by injudicious restraint, or unnecessary severity, they will be sufficiently vivacious without the aid of vanity.

In urging the necessity of paying a strict attention to the bias given to the main springs of human action, the desires and aversions of the soul, I think I am sanctioned by the wisdom and experience of mankind in every age and nation. But human wisdom may err, and human experience may deceive. A higher sanction than that of human wisdom is requisite; nor will my hopes of having obtained it

appear presumptuous, if it shall be found that what I have advanced as the elementary principles of education correspond with the elementary principles of the religion of the gospel.

## LETTER XII.

## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

*Preliminary Observations in Answer to Objections.—Correspondence between the Divine Precepts, and the Nature of the Human Mind.—Love of God.—How it operates on the Affections.—Productive of Benevolence.—Happy Effects of Religion on the Character.—Examples.*

IN the cultivation of the heart, I do not consider religion merely in the light of an auxiliary, but as the governing principle which is to direct our aims, and give life and efficacy to all our exertions.

On this subject I imagined I had, in the former editions of this work, sufficiently explained myself, and that my sentiments on a point which appears to me of the

greatest moment, could not be liable to mistake. My sentiments, however, I have cause to think, have been misunderstood by some of the zealous friends of religion, for I will not permit myself to think, that by persons assuming that character they could ever have been wilfully misrepresented.

As far as I have been able to learn, the misapprehension alluded to seems to have originated in associations, which I conceive to be erroneous; but which have, in the minds of some worthy people, connected every idea of religion with a peculiar phraseology, and a violent zeal for the establishment of some particular dogma.

Prejudices which have their origin in a reverence for sacred things, ought ever to be treated with respect; and therefore, though I shall not, in deference to them, act so far in opposition to my own principles, as to place any of the deductions of human reason upon a parity with divine revelation; nor recommend the adoption

of opinions formed by human wisdom, in the authoritative tone which the certainty of being inspired by God can only justify; I shall give such a full statement of my views as will, I trust, conciliate, if it does not convince.

As it is of the elementary principles of education that I profess to treat, I have confined myself to the examination of those early impressions which are likely to have a permanent influence on the passions, desires, and affections; and in the course of the inquiry, have had many opportunities of pointing out the agreement between the constitution of the human mind and the moral precepts of the gospel, which I have shown to be exquisitely adapted to its present state of weakness and imperfection. Having endeavoured to display the necessity of preventing those associations which direct the desires to objects that are in their nature hurtful and injurious, and which are in Holy Writ declared to be inimical to the soul, it now remains to shew

by what means, and under the influence of what associations, the desires and affections may, even in early life, be directed to objects of an opposite description. On this point we are not left to the fallacy of conjecture.

When the SON of GOD, during his abode on earth, was asked, which was the "first and great commandment?" what was his reply? "Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." This our Saviour expressly declared to be the *first* and *great* commandment. It therefore appeared to me, that the chief object in the cultivation of the heart, was to prepare it for the fulfilment of this commandment. After much consideration, I cannot see the subject in any other point of view. If the love of GOD is to be the active and operating principle of our lives, the idea of the Supreme Being must be associated in our minds with all that is good and lovely. To produce this association is, therefore,

an object of primary importance, nor, till we have succeeded in producing it, will our instructions in religion tend to make our children religious.

Now, in describing the methods that appear to me most effectual towards implanting this principle of divine love in the infant heart, I have not found it necessary to introduce any of the abstruse doctrines which have been the subject of theological controversy, but have, on the contrary, most carefully avoided them: being thoroughly convinced, that it is not by representing religion as a science, to be only understood by the initiated, that we can influence the affections, or raise the heart to God.

If there are any so bigotted to their own peculiar opinions, as to think it better for their children to learn to love these opinions, "with all their heart, and with all their mind, and with all their strength," than thus to love the LORD their GOD, I can only deplore the strength of the pre-

judices by which they are enslaved. Few, however, I am persuaded, will acknowledge, even to themselves, that they feel such a preference. But if they are at more pains to beget in the hearts of their children an attachment to any form of words, than to inspire them with gratitude to the unseen Benefactor, in whom they live and move and have their being, does not the object of their preference become obvious?

To believe "that GOD is, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him," is the first principle of all religion; but the mind may assent to the truth of the proposition, and the heart remain untouched. *Diligently* to seek GOD, implies not merely an exercise of the understanding, but of the desires and affections. I would, therefore, have the desires and affections early interested, by leading children to connect the idea of happiness with the Divine favour, and the idea of the Divine favour with their first notions of what is right and good.



Goodness is the proper object of love, and it is therefore by a notion of the goodness of GOD that the feelings of love towards him can only be inspired. Is it not then of great importance to guard against the introduction of whatever may impede the operation of this sentiment? On this account I have objected, and still object, to intermingling with our first religious instructions, any idea of the importance which we attach to such doctrinal points, as must in infancy be far beyond the comprehension. When a child learns to believe, that the favour of GOD is confined to those who go to the same church with his father and mother, or to think that it can be obtained by the repetition of a certain form of words, the love of GOD is, from that moment, connected with the selfish principle. The little heart exults in the exclusive claim, and looks down with proud pity on those who are less highly favoured.

When the first impressions of religion

are thus rendered instrumental in fostering the malevolent principle, they obviously produce fruits which the love of GOD would never have produced. By our Saviour we are told, that the commandment which enjoins us to love our neighbour as ourselves is intimately connected with that which preceded it, and indeed flows from the same source. In no instance do we find ought that is dictated by the spirit of GOD at variance with human nature. By the laws of our nature, every passion and affection that we habitually cherish tends to produce passions and affections of the same class with that in which we thus indulge. The love of GOD being the purest, the most sublime emotion of which the heart is capable, must, from the very nature of the human soul, exalt and purify its affections, preparing it for the exercise of those generous sympathies that flow from unbounded benevolence. When the first conceptions of the Deity have tended

to expand the heart with gratitude and love, every additional step in the knowledge of his attributes, every new light thrown on "the mystery that was hid for ages," but now displayed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will add force to these sentiments, and inspire a deeper humility, and a more profound veneration. With such feelings, no selfish or vindictive passions can possibly mingle. By true piety, no such passions can possibly be produced. From whatever has a tendency to inspire these passions, under whatever imposing form it may appear, I would endeavour to preserve the infant mind, and therefore, instead of warming the infant heart with zeal for any dogma that may be the object of veneration to myself or to my party, I would present it as a sacrifice to Him who fills heaven and earth with the majesty of his glory, and by the idea of one common Father, connect it in affection with the wide circle of the human race.

Under this impression, I offer the suggestions that occur to me, concerning the most likely method of directing the desires of the heart, to the Author of all purity and perfection; nor in doing so, do I see any necessity for pressing upon my readers the adoption of the peculiar doctrines of any particular church, or rather of any of the parties into which every church is unhappily divided. I am aware, that by thus depriving myself of the support of any of those parties, I may be deemed guilty of a presumptuous temerity; but it is in fact not in a dependence on my own strength, but from a consciousness of my own weakness, that I am, and have ever been deterred from enlisting under the banners of any party either in church or state. I have too anxiously observed human nature, and am too conscious of the degree in which I partake of its infirmities, to imagine that I might cast myself into the fire of party-zeal, without any risk of having my passions kindled by its unhallowed flames! \ Praying,

as from my heart I do, for the universal establishment of the divine truths of Christianity, I cannot be friendly to the obstacles which retard its progress ; and of these I believe an eager and violent contention for the establishment of our own peculiar dogmas to be by far the most formidable ! It not only prevents the dissemination of these truths among those who have hitherto remained ignorant of their promulgation ; but, where light has been already shed, it produces a return of darkness.

Scepticism is indeed no longer considered as a proof of superior wisdom and sagacity. But it is not long since it has ceased to be thus considered. When the fetters of superstition universally bound the human mind ; when the dominion of prejudice was established in every heart, and all with implicit submission yielded to her authority, then, to dare to doubt, was to betray an extraordinary degree of courage and resolution ; to dare to investigate, required a still superior magnanimity. In

the rage for investigation, however, we may perhaps find, that inquirers were not always at due pains to separate the tares from the wheat. The errors which their sagacity discovered were often mixed with the most important truths, without which alliance they could not so long have held their usurped dominion over the human mind. But of these the philosophers took no account: still influenced by the bigotry of prejudice, they condemned, as they had believed, *in toto*. From similar causes, similar effects have, even in these enlightened times, been produced; and it is from a view of these pernicious effects, that I so strongly urge the necessity of implanting the first and leading principles of religion in the minds of children, and permitting them to take root then, before we intermix these truths with our own peculiar notions.

Let it be our endeavour so to watch over the early association of our pupils, that in their riper years they may not be

under the temptation of rejecting truth, on account of the errors with which we have entangled it; nor of implicitly receiving error, from its being found mixed with truth.

In order to render the mind superior to prejudice, it has been proposed by some philosophers to omit every species of religious instruction, till the powers of the understanding are sufficiently ripe for comprehending all its mysteries. Religion is then to be learned as a science, a mere matter of speculation; it is to be propounded to the unbiassed judgment as an object of curiosity, almost as worthy of investigation as the laws of electricity or magnetism. But will the pupil come to the investigation with a mind equally well prepared? Has not the preceptor, through the whole course of his pupil's education, been labouring to implant the love of science in his mind? Has he not endeavoured to excite a desire for knowledge, by the stimulus of reward and punishment,

praise and disapprobation, and to associate it with the ideas of honour and esteem? If this unceasing attention, this unremit-  
ted assiduity, be necessary to direct the intellectual faculties to the pursuit of learning and science, is it to be supposed that religious sentiment, unconnected with all early association, unaided by any previous disposition, can all at once find admission to the mind?

I address myself to Christians; but should any parent, whose faith is yet unsettled, consult these pages, I earnestly conjure them, before they determine to omit all religious instruction, to consider whether, even with regard to this life only, the happiness of their children is not more likely to be promoted than injured, by imbibing a portion of that spirit which pervades the Gospel,—the spirit which teaches love to GOD, and good-will to man?

The propriety of cultivating feelings of benevolence towards our fellow-creatures is seldom denied in theory, however



frequently the duty may be omitted in practice. It has been recommended by the eloquence of heathen philosophers, and enforced by some extraordinary examples of heathen philanthropy; but as the foundations on which they built their beautiful theories of virtue were narrow and confined, the superstructure was frail and perishable; and never was the true foundation discovered, till brought to light by JESUS CHRIST. He first taught how the obstacles to benevolence were to be removed, by conquering that pride, self-love, and vain-glory, which had till then constituted a part of the catalogue of human virtues. He first taught the universality of its extent, by connecting it with the love of the common Father and Benefactor of all, and made the love of our fellow-creatures the test and criterion of our love to the Creator; while, from true devotion to the Supreme Being, he taught that benevolence to man must necessarily flow. He likewise taught, that upon all

who were convinced of these truths, and were anxious to fulfil the divine commandments, divine assistance would be bestowed. He alone ennobled virtue, by the assurance of an eternal reward ; and gave dignity to this probationary scene, by representing it as introductory to a glorious and everlasting state of felicity.

Is there aught in these doctrines that can tend to render the mind gloomy and unsocial? Will the habitual gratitude of the heart to the Supreme Benefactor detract from the enjoyment of his gifts? Will the idea of the constant presence and protection, the love and favour of such a Being, tend to depress the mind? Or will the wish for the approbation of this heavenly Father, Friend, Protector, and Judge, and the fear of his displeasure, impair the energy of virtue? Why, then, do we reject the salutary assistance which religion offers us, for subduing the worst, and cultivating the best, passions and affections of the human heart? Alas! because by the public

and the splendid scenes of this vain and transitory life, we are so completely engrossed, that in the education of our children we lose every other view but that of qualifying them to attract the applause and admiration of the world. For this, in our boys, we cultivate the understanding while we neglect the heart. In our girls, we leave both heart and understanding to the care of chance, while we assiduously endeavour to make them excel in a few superficial and useless accomplishments. But while we thus strive to build the fabric of their fame, it is to be feared, that in laying the foundation we sometimes undermine their happiness.

“ One self-approving hour whole years outweighs  
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas.”

The applause and admiration of the world, for which we so anxiously prepare them, it may never be their lot to receive. Fortune may remove her pedestal, on which, if the candidate for admiration does

not stand, in vain will he hope for success; or envy may stifle the voice of approbation, or superior address and impudence may gain the prize. From a thousand sources disappointment may flow; bringing to minds perverted by a false ambition all the anguish of chagrin, envy, and malevolence.

The sympathy which makes the applause of our fellow-creatures so grateful to the heart, the sensibility which makes us so keenly feel the wounds of neglect, ridicule, or disapprobation, may be made instruments to form the character either to vice or virtue, according to the direction they receive from early association. Where the love of GOD has been early implanted in the heart; where the mind has been taught to approve itself by its idea of the approbation of a Being infinite in all perfection, immutable as powerful, benevolent as wise, its sympathy will become discriminating; it will only be gratified by the applause which in some measure accords with that

of the Supreme. Sensibility will then serve to heighten the delight of that sweet consciousness which arises from a sense of the performance of duty ; and this delight will be augmented, not by the vain applause of the multitude, but by the concurring approbation of the good and wise. A young man who has imbibed these principles, will, on entering into life, escape much of the danger to which young men are generally exposed, from the desire of obtaining the applause of those with whom it may be their fate to associate. He will distinguish between the agreeable and the worthy, the solid and the superficial, the real and the seeming ; he will neither be dazzled by the splendour of talents, nor misled by the sophistry of argument. He will, on all occasions, have an unerring standard to refer to ; and should he, by the strength of temptation, or the force of example, be led to make a momentary aberration into the paths of vice, his excursion will be short, his return certain.

It may perhaps be said, that experience does not justify us in making this assertion; that, on the contrary, we every day see instances of those, who, after having received the most religious education, and been most strictly brought up in the fear of GOD, have no sooner been released from paternal restraint, than they have entered on the career of vice, and become the most zealous champions of infidelity.

A point so momentous is worthy of our attention; and calls for our minute and anxious investigation. Let us first examine, how notions of the Deity, and religious sentiment, the consequence of these notions, are commonly instilled by pious parents; and perhaps we may no longer be at any loss concerning the cause to which the dereliction of religion may, in many instances, be fairly attributed.

We have already observed the effects of strong and painful sensation in producing associations of terror and aversion. These effects are often too little attended to in

the religious education of the nursery. By pious but ill-judging parents, the idea of the Deity is introduced to the imagination of infants, accompanied by exactly similar impressions to those which were conjured up by the name of raw-head and bloody-bones. Their kind and heavenly Father is made to appear to them in the light of an invisible but avenging tyrant, whose service is perfect bondage. That hatred of sin, which springs from the perfection of the moral attributes of the Deity, is prematurely presented to their minds, at a period when they are yet incapable of perceiving abstract truth. The impression that is by these means made upon their senses is, however, sufficiently strong to remain permanent; but whether the associations thus produced will be those of pleasure or aversion, I leave it to the wise to judge. Would good people permit their zeal to be under the dominion of their judgment; would they pay some attention to the progress of mind, and observe the

slow and gradual process of nature in the development of the faculties, they would not idly attempt to explain to children subjects of abstract speculation, at a period when at best it can have no other effect than to leave upon their minds impressions of weariness and wonder.

What wild and incoherent notions children sometimes form from these futile and ill-directed attempts to imbue them with religious principle, we must all have had occasion to observe. I shall give a few instances sufficiently illustrative of my argument.

A fine boy of four years old, son to a worthy clergyman, who,

“ Far in a wild remote from public view,  
From youth to age *in his own parish* grew ;”

having received from this pious father the most awful but incomprehensible notions of the Divinity, happened to be detected one evening in telling a falsehood. After a long and a serious lecture on the enor-



mity of the sin, which the little culprit was told had made him liable to the wrath of Heaven, he was sent into a dark room to beg pardon of GOD for having thus offended him. The night was dark and stormy. A succession of black clouds chased each other along the heavens, and obscured, except at intervals, the face of the moon. The appearance of the sky had caught the boy's attention; his mind had been previously worked up to a degree of awe and enthusiasm, which is at all times of life particularly favourable for contemplating the grand phenomena of nature. He remained for a considerable time in his place of penance, and at length returned to the parlour with a smiling countenance. "You must forgive me now, papa," cried he, "for GOD has forgiven me."

"What do you mean, child?" said the astonished father; "How are you sure that GOD has been reconciled to you?"

"O, I am *quite* sure," returned the

boy, "*for he smiled at me through the clouds!*"

This was evidently the consequence of a false impression made upon the mind, by sending the child to meet GOD in the dark room. Had a thunder-storm then taken place, there can be little doubt that he would have interpreted every peal into the language of an angry Deity, and would probably have been so completely terror-struck, as never through life to have conquered the impression. And ought we not (it will be asked) to teach children to fear GOD as the punisher of sin? I answer, that whoever pays sufficient attention to the infant mind, will perceive, that to present the idea of GOD's love and favour, as necessarily withdrawn from us when we offend against him, will be amply sufficient for our purpose. The desire of esteem, or of being the object of affection, is one of the strongest desires of which the heart is, in infancy, susceptible. Where notions of the Divine goodness have been early im-

pressed upon the mind, a desire of obtaining the divine approbation will naturally ensue; but this desire will by no means diminish the reverential awe, which must inevitably be inspired by the idea of an unseen and ever-present GOD. The fear of offending him will, however, in this instance, be connected with the principle of love; and produce on the heart more salutary impressions than at that early period could be made on it by the slavish dread of deep and mysterious vengeance.

When notions of GOD and of religion are associated with ideas of a painful and a gloomy cast, can we wonder, if the mind should seize the first opportunity of emancipating itself from their cruel bondage? This opportunity can, to young men at least, be never wanting. With avidity will they listen to the sophistry of scepticism, who have been taught to tremble while they believed. Those who have found belief to be slavery, will consider infidelity as freedom. They may, however, find it an

easier matter to triumph over their faith than their prejudices; and while they exonerate themselves from all obligation to religious duty, it is not impossible that they may still retain the slavish spirit of fear and superstition.\*

Such converts to infidelity nothing less than a miracle can reclaim. The gloomy and unpleasant ideas they have associated with religion, strengthen their resistance to the admission of truth, and render them incapable of examining with impartiality the weight of the arguments on either side, their prejudices being all won over to that of scepticism. When a man has, in these circumstances, *made up his mind*, all arguments intended to convince him of his mistake only serve to confirm him in his chosen way of thinking. One who has been altogether uninstructed in the principles of religion has here a manifest advantage, as it has been well observed

\* The life and death of Voltaire furnish an apposite illustration of the truth of what is here asserted.

by a celebrated philosopher,\* that “an argument or evidence of any kind, that is entirely *new* to a man, may make a proper impression upon him; but if it has been often proposed to him, and he has had time to view and consider it, *so as to have hit upon any method of evading the force of it*, he is afterwards quite callous to it, and can very seldom be prevailed upon to give it any proper attention.”

Let us now consider the consequence of this dereliction of religious principle.

The associations of happiness and virtue, of vice and misery, which are fixed and confirmed by religious principles, can scarcely fail to be weakened by its loss. If the idea of happiness be connected with self-gratification, and the idea of misery attached to the disappointment of self-will, present interest and present pleasure will be pursued as happiness; and where the passions are ardent, the animal spirits

\* Dr. Priestley.

strong, and the habits of virtue feeble and unsettled, the man who has cast aside the higher motives offered by religion, while he floats without anchor or compass on the sea of temptation, has little chance of escaping the vortex of vice.

Instances, indeed, there are, of the associations fixed by religious principle in early life remaining permanent, after the principle that gave them birth has been denied or forgotten. Where the passions are moderate, and the temper amiable and serene, a man of good understanding, who has contracted early habits of sobriety and decorum, may so well perform the relative duties of life, as to leave us nothing to regret, but that such a man should have deprived himself of that *hope which rejoiceth the heart*.

There are yet persons of another cast of temper, who are particularly liable to be injured by associations, which connect with the idea of religion feelings of terror and disgust. When persons addicted to melancholy, whose low and timid spirits stand in

greatest need of the consolation and support which Christianity so peculiarly affords, have, by the powerful influence of these associations, been impelled to seek refuge in infidelity, how deplorable is their situation! But on such minds this is the natural, the almost inevitable, consequence of injudicious modes of religious instruction; for when gloomy ideas have been early united with the ideas of religion, religion will be a painful bondage, and gladly will they throw off its yoke. What is to them the consequence? Can the whole world present a spectacle so worthy of commiseration, as that of a timid and dejected soul divested of all support from the invigorating hope of heavenly protection and eternal happiness? To such a mind the prospects of this life are veiled in eternal clouds, and no enlivening ray darts from another to cheer the gloom. Without a regard to GOD, as the Maker and Governor of all things, this world affords but an uncomfortable prospect; without a reliance on his superintending care, the anxiety concern-

ing future events must, to a naturally desponding temper, be a source of incessant misery. In vain does fortune smile : In vain are his wishes fulfilled : In vain does happiness seem to solicit his acceptance ;—the gnawing worm of discontent preys upon his bosom ; a morbid irritability of temper adds its cruel stings ; and if the loss of reason does not fill up the measure of his calamity, the want of energy, which is consequent upon despondency, will, in the ruin of his worldly affairs, probably justify the most gloomy forebodings of despair.

How different would have been the situation of such a person as has been now described, had the first conceptions of the Deity and of revealed religion been associated with cheerful, exhilarating, and agreeable impressions ! He would not then have so easily been led to relinquish principles which had been made to him a source of hope and consolation for a blank and joyless scepticism. Had religious sentiment been blended with all that touches the heart and charms the



imagination, the beauties of nature, and the still superior beauties of moral truth, it would not so readily have yielded to the attacks of the witty, or the arguments of the plausible ; but have remained to solace and invigorate the mind in every event, and through every period of life.

Here a fact comes in to the support of theory ; and I can assert the observations I have presumed to make to be amply justified by experience.

One gentleman it has been my happiness to know, who entered upon life at the age of sixteen, without guide but his own principle, without monitor but the precepts of education, and the dictates of his own heart. Unsullied by the temptations of a capital, he was plunged into the temptations of a camp. Fond of society, where his cheerful temper and easy manners formed him to shine, but still fonder of improvement, neither the inducements of camp or city interrupted his unwearied pursuits of literature and science. Surrounded by companions who had caught

the contagion of scepticism, he, at this early period of life, listened to their arguments; weighed, examined, detected their futility; and rejected them! In prosperity and adversity, in public and in private life, the sentiments of religion retained their influence on his heart. Through life they were his guide, in death his consolation. When sinking by painful steps into an early grave, "With what gratitude," he exclaimed, "with what delightful gratitude, do I now look back to the period of my infancy, and to the judicious conduct of my mother, who made religion appear to me in colours so engaging and so congenial! Had I been taught as other boys are taught, my passions would have made me an easy prey to vice; my love of inquiry would have led me to infidelity. She prepared me for the trial of faith and virtue, and, thanks to GOD, I have come off victorious. Had religion been made to me a gloomy task in infancy, where would now have been my consolation?"

From these, and a thousand similar in-

stances, it appears of great importance to prepossess the minds of children at an early period in favour of religion. It appears to me, that if the mode on which we convey to them the rudiments of religious knowledge is calculated to excite aversion or disgust, we shall, instead of prepossessing them in favour of religion, prepossess them against it, and prepare them for receiving with avidity the poison that is offered in a more inviting form, and of which they cannot taste without peril to their souls.

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## LETTER XIII.

### SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

IF the establishment of religious principle in the minds of our pupils, on a firm and lasting foundation, appear to us an object of importance, we shall not be satisfied with a slight and hasty survey of the means of accomplishing it. I shall therefore enter into a still farther investigation of the subject, assured that those who agree with me, in considering religion as the only never-failing source of joy and consolation, will not begrudge me their attention.

The graces and virtues which adorn the Christian character are of such intrinsic value as to attract the esteem and veneration

of the confirmed infidel. Why is the fruit admired, while the tree that bringeth it forth is held in contempt? Why is the true source denied or despised, while the stream that flows from it is held in universal estimation? Is it not because the tree is not examined, nor the source analyzed? because fruit, which springs not from that tree, bears its name; and waters of bitterness pretend to have derived their origin from the fountain of sweets?

If we would not have our children deterred from this fair and candid examination, we must take care that they are not taught to consider the duties of religion as separate and distinct from the common concerns of life. We must take care to convince them, that GOD regards the integrity of the heart; and that he can never be imposed upon by the sound of words.

Children naturally imitate the manners of those around them, but unless, where premature vanity has been excited, they always express themselves easily and art-

lessly. They are, however, very apt to catch the terms on which they perceive great stress to be laid, and to become vain of using them. We accordingly hear from infant lips, the *cant* of sensibility, the *cant* of taste, the *cant* of sentiment, and the *cant* of religion. Now, few I believe are so weak as to be imposed upon by this cant in the former instances. When we hear a child speak of *the tender sympathy of congenial hearts*, or of *the exquisite beauty of a fine picture*, we laugh at the absurdity, and perceive the grossness of affectation. But let it speak of sanctification, or adoption, and the pious mother will instantly persuade herself, that her child is a miracle of piety! In both instances, however, the child is equally affected. It imitates the sounds it hears uttered, exactly as a parrot would imitate them, and, like the parrot, rejoices, when by its mimic art it attracts notice and applause. Even when this species of artifice is too glaring to escape detection, we are too apt to smile at it

when practised by the young and innocent, without reflecting how much the pure integrity of the heart may be sullied by thus aiming to deceive.

Another very serious objection to the use of a peculiar phraseology is, that it marks us out as *pretenders* to a special share of the Divine favour, and shows that we affect to consider ourselves as separated from the rest of mankind. We ought, however, to remember, that the human mind is so constituted, as very unwillingly to admit the assumed superiority which pretensions to uncommon sanctity imply. A grateful sense of the Divine goodness, cheerful submission to the Divine will, diffusive charity and extensive benevolence, touch the chords of sympathy in every generous breast; but by the austerity of a devotee, no such sympathy was ever yet awakened.

At a time of life when the world appears to wear a smiling and inviting aspect, if religion be dressed in frowns, she

will gain a few willing votaries. In our endeavours to impress religious principle upon the tender mind, we must have it still in our recollection, that the laws of nature can never be violated with impunity. Let us remember, that youth is the season of cheerfulness; that the infancy of all animals is frolicsome and gay; that whatever is gloomy is then disgusting; and that when the animal spirits are in full play, the mind may not be capable of discriminating between the serious and the gloomy.

“It is observable,” says Hartley, “that the mere transit of words expressing strong ideas over the ears of children affects them.” On this principle, the idea of an unseen Benefactor, who is the Giver of every good, the Author of all the felicity of which the infant heart is sensible, may easily be conveyed to the mind at a very early period. By a little pains, the most pleasing associations may be formed with the idea of this unseen Benefactor. Let the moment be



seized, when the little heart dilates with joy at some unexpected pleasure, to form its first attempt at prayer. "I thank thee, O GOD, for making my mamma, or other friends, so good to me," may be quite sufficient; and if suggested upon proper occasions, and repeated not as a formal duty but a spontaneous effusion of the heart, it will not fail to produce an effect upon the affections. As the sphere of observation is enlarged, and the sources of pleasure multiply upon the mind, every object of nature that inspires admiration, every social endearment which produces delight, may be made an instrument to conduct the infant heart to GOD. Let me not be laughed at for the confession, and I shall freely acknowledge to you, that I at this moment look back with infinite pleasure to the delightful period, when, with the simplicity of infant innocence, I poured out my little soul in grateful thanks to the Almighty for the happiness enjoyed at a dancing-school ball! Nor am I certain, that

all the catechisms and all the hymns, with which my poor memory was loaded, produced half the benefit to my mind that flowed from this powerful association of felicity with its Divine Source.

I confess it is much easier, and perhaps more gratifying to our vanity, as well as to our indolence, to make children get long prayers and catechisms by heart, than thus by gentle and imperceptible degrees to impress them with feelings of gratitude and affection for their Heavenly Father. But whoever would succeed in the great work of education, must begin by conquering vanity and indolence in themselves, for these are the great, the perpetually occurring, obstacles to success.

I believe the recollection of most people, who have been educated by pious parents will furnish them with numerous instances of the inutility of loading the memory at an early period with creeds and catechisms, which are totally beyond the comprehension. Even those which are best adapted

to the capacity of childhood, lose all their meaning, when detached into the small and broken portions, by the repetition of which they are committed to memory. Often in these repetitions of detached sentences, are erroneous, nay sometimes ridiculous, associations formed, which it may afterwards be a difficult matter to shake off. My recollection, I candidly confess, does not furnish me with a single instance of improvement from any of the didactic compositions I was obliged to get by heart; and yet these were all as judiciously chosen as possible. Often did my dear and amiable instructress listen with mingled solicitude and delight to my senseless though accurate recitation of passages, which excited in her mind a train of ideas very different from those they raised in mine. Had she stopped here; had she contented herself, as many do, with this one method of religious instruction; it is probable that the importance of religious principle would

now have appeared to me in a very inferior light.

I have perhaps already advanced enough upon this head, to expose myself to the censure of many serious and well-disposed persons, whose respect for whatever has been sanctioned by the practice of the good and pious will not permit them to examine into the propriety, or to doubt the efficacy, of a mode of instruction stamped with such respectable authority. Let it be remembered, however, that I presume not to dictate, or to impose my own feelings and experience as a criterion, in opposition to the feelings and experience of others. Where I dissent, I wish it to be understood, that I do so with becoming diffidence; and that I rather urge the attentive consideration of my arguments than the implicit adoptions of my plans.

I have already observed, that whoever wishes religious principles to influence the heart, and govern the conduct in future life, must early influence the heart and the

affections in its favour. This, from all that we know of the human mind, can only be affected by means of agreeable associations; and seldom, I fear, are these attached to a catechism, in the way in which catechisms are usually taught. Still, if religious principle were to be instilled by such means, it might be proper to force perseverance, in spite of aversion; but what principle can an infant acquire from sounds to which he can attach no sense? Before we have been at any pains to inspire him with the love of GOD, can we imagine, that principles which ought to be rooted and grounded in love, may be forced upon the mind in the form of dry and didactic compositions, or of elaborate metaphysical speculations, deduced through such a chain of argument as we ourselves can scarcely trace? And is it before the mind is able to compare and to combine, before the powers of reflection have begun to operate, and while the ideas received by means of the senses are yet few and confused, that we can ex-

pect an infant to comprehend them? If a father intend that his son should be a mathematician, he will not begin at four or five years old to make him get by heart the problems of Euclid; but following nature in the gradual development of the faculties, he will begin by the simplest propositions of arithmetic; and not vainly expect, that by a jingle of words he is to teach his child the nature of a cycloid or parabola, before he has been taught by his senses that two and two make four.

Let me not however be misunderstood. Far from depreciating the value of those elementary works, I am for securing to children all the benefits they are calculated to convey, and therefore contend for the propriety of withholding them until the mind is prepared for their reception. Instead of making a child repeat words to which it can affix no ideas, I would first present to it in the simplest forms, the ideas which these words are intended to communicate: and instead of first imposing on it the task of

getting creeds and catechisms by heart, and then taxing its patience by explanations of their contents, I would, by little and little, give it as accurate notions as it was capable of receiving on the subject matter of them; and when I saw my design in some measure accomplished, would then, and not till then, present the written document to be committed to memory.\*

To give an instance with regard to prayer. As soon as the infant tongue can lisp its wishes, I would have it taught simply to beg GOD's blessing; and as soon as I found it possible to impress upon its mind some notion of the Divine power, wisdom, and goodness, I would inform him that GOD who made us, and all things, was our Heavenly Father, and that we ought to praise or hallow his name with thankful

\* In duty to my readers I cannot forbear recommending to their attention the judicious advice given to parents, on the method of instructing children in the catechism, creed, Lord's prayer, &c. by the Rev. R. Morehead, in a volume of his sermons lately published.

hearts. The first sentence of the Lord's prayer would follow in course. Of the kingdom of GOD children cannot be made to form very distinct ideas, but it may easily be connected with notions of perfect goodness and happiness; and when the mind has been led to form this association, *thy kingdom come* will not be pronounced as part of an unmeaning rhapsody. When a child has been taught some notions of obedience, it will easily be made to comprehend, that the will of GOD might be obeyed in all things; and if a happy moment be chosen for instructing it in the nature of this petition, the impression may be highly salutary. The same may be obtained with regard to the petition for our daily bread, by a proper attention in the manner of introducing the previous explanation; as that GOD makes the corn to spring, and the herbs to grow, and preserves the cattle and the beasts of the field for the use of man, &c. At the same time that the words are repeated by the lips, a foundation for



trust in the Divine Providence will thus be laid in the infant heart. The remaining passages of this divine composition may all be rendered equally subservient to the cultivation of moral and religious principle, and I confess I should think it much more for a child's real advantage, to have ideas thus fixed forcibly and permanently in the mind by a slow and gradual process, than to have the same form of words rapidly impressed upon its memory, and repeated from day to day, without any ideas being attached to them.

The eagerness of infantine curiosity may be rendered instrumental to the acquisition of religious knowledge, as to every other species of knowledge; but we must be at some pains to direct the curiosity into the proper channel. This may very easily be effected.

As it is by means of the senses that ideas are first acquired, the curiosity is early attracted to external objects; and as the great volume of nature is open to the

senses, it is even in early infancy perused with avidity and delight. The difference betwixt the works of nature and those of art is easily discoverable at a very early period of life; and the evident superiority of the former is, even to the capacity of a child, such an argument of the superior power and wisdom of the Creator, as will readily be comprehended. I have already hinted at the means by which the idea of his goodness ought to be impressed; and if ideas are thus grafted on the infant heart, of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Almighty Ruler of the universe, they will, as a necessary consequence, beget the feelings of love, reverence, and gratitude; which I cannot but consider as a better foundation, both for a *rational* and *practical* assent to the truths of the Gospel, than all the creeds, catechisms, and homilies, that ever poor infant was doomed to get by heart.

The power of the affections in influencing our opinions is obvious to common

observation. Where the associations of religion have produced secret antipathy and disgust, the powerful principle of self-love may be considered as enlisted on the side of infidelity. The very contrary of this must be the case, where all the affections of love, esteem, and complacency, have been early engaged on the side of religion.

“ The reason,” says Dr. Clarke, “ why faith is in the New Testament always insisted upon as a moral virtue is, because faith in the Scripture sense is not barely an act of the understanding, but a mixed act of the will also; consisting very much in that *simplicity and unprejudicedness of mind*, which our Saviour calls receiving the kingdom of GOD as a little child; in that freedom from guile and deceit, which was the character of Nathaniel; and in that teachable disposition, and desire to know the will of GOD, for which the Bereans were so highly commended, *who searched the Scripture daily, whether these things were true.*” Does it not appear evident, that

to lay the foundation for this *teachable disposition*, we must interest the affections? If this were more generally attended to, we should not find the doctrine of a Divine Providence, and the influences of Divine grace, so often rejected with contempt. Were we gradually, by considering "the things that are seen and temporal," led to the consideration of "those that are unseen and eternal," they would make a deeper impression both on our understandings and on our hearts.

Those who have been taught to contemplate the wonders of creation as the work of Divine Wisdom, and to enjoy every blessing of existence as the gift of Infinite Goodness, will embrace, without repugnance, the doctrines of Christianity. These, as the capacity unfolds itself, ought to be presented in the simplest forms, divested as much as possible of all scholastic terms, and all incomprehensible articles of belief, however we may ourselves venerate and respect them.

Instead of labouring to impress upon the tender mind an idea that salvation depends upon any metaphysical definition that forms a peculiar tenet of our particular church; we should, when he is of an age to have its tenets explained, be careful to inform him, that many pious Christians entertain opinions different from ours; and that though those we have adopted appear to us most consonant to truth, we presume not to condemn those who differ from us.

A knowledge of the Scriptures I look upon as a very essential part of religious education; but to render this knowledge really useful, it is not sufficient that their contents be impressed upon the memory; the lessons they contain must be made to reach the heart. Whether this can be effected by getting long passages by rote, I am more than doubtful. It is from considering scriptural knowledge as *perfectly analogous* with human learning, that the idea has ever been entertained; but the analogy is far from being complete.

Analogy is, in truth, a dangerous and unwieldy weapon, which seldom fails to run beyond the point where resemblance stops.

We very properly take advantage of that period when the susceptibility of memory with respect to *words* is most remarkable, to lay in a store of *words* for future use; as in the elements of grammar, arithmetic, &c. the first principles of which are learned by rote long before the mind can have any notion of their import. But with grammar, arithmetic, &c. the heart and the affections have no concern. They are merely the instruments of knowledge; and as such, when the love of knowledge is sufficiently inspired, they will recommend themselves to the attention of the pupil, who will then find the advantage of those early lessons, which were assigned as a task, and performed as a drudgery. The moral and devotional sentiments, which it is our wish to breathe into the infant heart, have no analogy with the science of words or of numbers; they are not merely

branches of knowledge connected with other branches, and necessary instruments of information ; but they are, as described by Hartley, those “ to which all other branches of knowledge ought to be considered as mere preparatories and preliminaries.”

Where the knowledge of Scripture is forced upon children as a task ; where they are compelled to recite long portions of it by rote, in the same manner as they decline nouns and conjugate verbs ; the passages learned may be retained by the memory, but we may reasonably doubt whether they will ever impress the heart. I am, I confess, the more inclined to doubt it, because the most confirmed reprobates I have ever known had an accurate knowledge of Scripture, acquired in the manner above alluded to.

The first step towards inspiring your children with a veneration for the Sacred Writings, and with a desire of knowing something of their contents, must be the

observations they will naturally and voluntarily make upon your frequent perusal of them. While they see other books read and dismissed, and that the Bible alone remains the constant companion of your serious hours, the subject of your daily and delightful meditation, they will associate the idea of superior excellence with the Bible, before they are able to read. But, on the contrary, if they see it only brought out upon a tedious and gloomy Sunday, and then read as a duty and a task, the prepossession that will take place in disfavour of its contents will probably never be eradicated.

As soon as a child can read so well as to be able to understand something of what it reads, its imagination and curiosity ought to be excited by the mention of some of the passages in the Old Testament which are most likely to amuse and gratify the fancy; these afterwards, as a favour, it ought to be permitted to read. By a repetition of this, as often as occasion offers,



a pretty accurate knowledge of the Old Testament will be acquired; and acquired at a period, when, notwithstanding the assertions of certain pretenders to extraordinary delicacy, the purity of the mind is incapable of being soiled by an account of manners, which, though suitable to ancient simplicity, appear gross to modern refinement; but which will pass unnoticed, where no train of ideas upon improper subjects has been previously fixed in the mind, so as to be called up by the perusal. This is, indeed, one of the reasons why I should be solicitous to have a knowledge of the historical part of the Old Testament acquired at a very early period; and that it will be more effectually attained by the means above described, than by reading it straight forward as a task, I am justified in asserting. As a task, indeed, the Scriptures ought never to be read. The permission of reading them ought to appear in the light of a glorious and highly valuable privilege. But as they frequently

treat of subjects far remote from the beaten paths of human knowledge, a too hasty application of particular passages to subjects that are familiar to the mind, but that are of transient and trivial importance, ought by all means to be discouraged. Nothing can be more dangerous, or more destructive of the true spirit of piety, than the habit of applying the descriptions of vice, or the denunciations pronounced against sinners, to individuals, or to classes of persons existing in our own times. Young persons ought to be guarded against a practice, which, if indulged in, will infallibly produce a spirit at variance with the spirit of the Gospel. Habits of an opposite tendency it ought to be our care to introduce, by teaching children to apply the warnings and admonitions of Scripture as lessons recorded for their instruction, and that for the use they make of this instruction they are to be accountable.

By what I have advanced, I hope it will be perceived that I am an advocate for en-

gaging the mind, as well as the heart and affections, in the service of religion at a very early period; and that to secure this important object, I would carefully remove every obstacle that might throw difficulties in the way of its accomplishment. The obstacles that appear to me most formidable are, first, those that arise from connecting with ideas of religion, ideas productive of antipathy and disgust; and, secondly, those that arise from false impressions upon the tender mind, by erroneous views of the nature and object of religious duties. To guard against the introduction of the former of these obstacles, I would have the first notions of religion connected with feelings which we know from experience to be productive of delight; and to guard against the latter, I would watch the progress of the understanding, and carefully refrain from forcing it to wear the semblance of having adopted opinions, before it is sufficiently ripened to enable it to comprehend the meaning of the words

in which they are conveyed. I am not so sanguine as to expect, by aught that I can urge, to convince the prejudiced, or to alter the conduct of those who maintain the necessity of initiating children at an early period into those abstruse mysteries which have for so many ages exercised the wisdom, the learning, the ingenuity, and, I am sorry to add, the temper of schoolmen and divines.

A demonstration of the impossibility of giving children clear ideas upon abstruse subjects, must be reserved for the subsequent volume; in the mean time, I shall beg leave to state the result of my own experience, in the course of many years' attentive observation to the subject in question.

From early life I have been accustomed to behold the effects of the mode of instruction which I deprecate: and have known many children who, at eight or ten years of age, could repeat long commentaries on the *Confession of Faith*, ex-

planations of explanations on the doctrines of adoption, justification, and original sin ; but confess I never met with one whose mind seemed to be so far impressed, as to have any rational notion of the principles upon which these articles of faith were founded. They had, indeed, learned them as Mrs. More directs, “ *as names and things on which our salvation hangs ;* and on that account venerated them for a time as incomprehensible mysteries, associating the idea of wickedness and reprobation to all that did not repeat the same belief *in the same words*. But what were the consequences of this species of instruction ? Some, by having all their notions of religion comprised in those *peculiar doctrines*, which they were forced to venerate before they could be made to comprehend, continued to substitute a blind adherence to their sect, and a pious hatred to every other description of Christians, for that religion which purifieth the heart, and teaches unbounded love to God and man !

Others, on finding that some points which they had been taught to consider as spiritual (and with which they had associated all their ideas of Christianity), were not perfectly tenable, made no scruple to relinquish the whole : and I may truly say, that the most confirmed infidels I have ever known were of this description.

Most perfectly do I agree with Mrs. More in recommending the example of our Saviour, as our model in the instruction of youth. Entirely do I coincide with her in thinking, that “ we ought to teach as *He* taught, by “ interesting parables ; which, while they “ corrected the heart, left some exercise for “ the ingenuity in the solution, and for the “ feelings in their application : to teach as “ *He* taught, by seizing on surrounding “ objects, passing events, local circumstances, “ peculiar characters, apt allusions, just “ analogy, appropriate illustration.” To teach as *He* taught (I should beg leave to add), not by loading the memory, and perplexing the mind, and wearying the spirits ; but by excit-

ing in the soul the spirit of fervent piety to GOD, and love to man ; bringing into constant exercise the best affections of the heart, —Gratitude, Hope, Joy, and Charity. Above all, to teach as *He* taught, by setting an example of the purest virtue !

Would we have religious instruction produce a permanent effect upon the mind, we must take care that nothing enters into our plan of education which may counteract its influence. If we indeed wish our children to pay obedience to the Divine commands, we will not despise, as trivial or insignificant, the slightest circumstance by which the selfish, or sensual passions and desires may be excited, cherished, or inflamed. Nor will we neglect the cultivation of those benevolent affections which the spirit of religion dictates, and which the spirit of religion purifies and brings to perfection. Unless we are thus consistent, we need not flatter ourselves, that by our exhortations we fulfil the benign command of our Lord, whose gracious desire it is

that we should not only “suffer little  
“children to come to him,” but that we  
should remove all obstacles that eventually  
deter them, and be careful that we “*forbid*  
“*them not.*”

END OF VOL. I.



